

RENASCENCE

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CONTENTS

Summer, 1958

London Letter	John Pick	171
Imagery in Modern Marian Poetry	Mother A. von Wellsheim, R.S.C.J.	176
Some Symbols of Death & Destiny in <i>Four Quartets</i>	Sr. Marie Virginia	187
Herbert & Hopkins: Two Lyrics	Sr. M. Joselyn, O.S.B.	192

Review Articles:

One Wheel, All Square	H. Marshall McLuhan	196
Mauriac: Words & Critics	Fernand Vial	200

Book Reviews:

<i>Maurras jusqu'à l'Action Française</i>	Chester W. Obuchowski	207
<i>Autobiographical Writings (Newman)</i>		
<i>Faith & Prejudice</i>	Martin J. Svaglic	208
<i>The Mystery of the Holy Innocents & Other Poems</i>		
<i>Péguy, his Prose and Poetry</i>	Jean David	212
<i>The Strange Islands</i>	Sister M. Thérèse	214
<i>Edward Martyn and the Irish Theatre</i>	Michael J. O'Neill	219



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London Letter

BY JOHN PICK

SINCE our last report on Catholic letters in London (*Renascence* IX, No. 1) there have been several losses. Monsignor Ronald Knox in his seventies died as a national celebrity, and his funeral at Westminster Cathedral was attended by two thousand, including Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. The sermon was by Father D'Arcy. Only a few months earlier Monsignor Knox had delivered the Romanes Lecture "On English Translation" at Oxford with a physician hovering in the background. The two chief monuments he left were *Enthusiasm* to which he had devoted thirty years, and his translation of the Bible to which he had given ten years. At the time of his death he was translating the autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux which is scheduled to appear this year. But he left also a nation-wide reputation as a wit and a raconteur.

At the age of fifty-five Roy Campbell was killed in an automobile accident in Portugal where he had been living in recent years. Indeed, his book *Portugal* had just appeared. *The Tablet* found it a conglomerate of enthusiasm and omissions. The second volume of his *Collected Poems* was recently published, the *Catholic Herald* observing that Campbell was "A bull in the sometimes tame arena of contemporary English letters." W. H. Gardner has announced that he is engaged in writing a critical biography of this man who had such powerful loves as well as such virulent hates.

Published posthumously was Viola Meynell's *Short Stories* but in this genre her reputation is probably a minor one.

But if there have been losses there have also been gains: Monsignor Knox was in his seventies at the time of his death and Siegfried Sassoon in his seventies at the time of his conversion. Back in 1929 he won the Hawthornden Prize for *The Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* and last year his *Sequences* was awarded the Queen's Medal for Poetry.

Another recent convert is Hugh Ross Williamson, both a playwright and an historian (*Enigmas of History*). His spiritual autobiography, culminating in his becoming a Catholic, is entitled *The Walled Garden*.

Alfred Noyes, no longer a recent convert, published *A Letter to Lucian and Other Poems* which was rather severely criticized by *Blackfriars*: "Acomplishment of versification cannot save his religious poetry from triteness, nor a certain sweetness of diction, an occasional melancholy charm, infuse life into his romanticism."

WITHOUT question the greatest living Catholic poet in England is Dame Edith Sitwell and the appearance of her *Collected Poems* should send critics to studying her constant growth and development. She has been working at an anthology of medieval religious poetry and gave readings from it at a benefit recital at the Dorchester; the event was held to raise funds for the restoration of the chapel at Stonor.

She is of major stature and so are Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh. With Hugh Greene the former published *The Spy's Bedside Book*, but what really touched off a critical controversy was his new play *The Potting Shed* which opened in New York and then in London at the Globe with Sir John Gielgud. The debate has been predominantly theological. In the play a priest offers God what he loves most, his faith, in return for the life of a nephew who has committed suicide because of the loss of his own faith: "Take away what I love most. Take away my faith, but let him live." God accepts the bargain and the priest drags on for thirty whisky-sodden years in a dark and arid night. In the last enigmatic scene however, his faith apparently is regained and he is left praying. The issues raised by the play are typical of Greene, with the loss of faith perhaps more apparent than real. Out of a disturbing religious problem Greene has succeeded in making a disturbing drama.

Evelyn Waugh in his new novel, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, has thoroughly disconcerted his critics by writing quasi-autobiographically of one of his own experiences—an experience which Waugh's friends vouch for. But the element of fiction also enters in so outrageously that the book becomes as much a satire on his critics as on himself. The pseudo-logical plausibility and constantly rising tempo of absurdities are handled with triumphantly ingenious and inventive skill. Waugh will soon be turning to quite a different genre, for as the sole literary executor of Monsignor Knox he is planning the official biography.

SIR COMPTON MacKENZIE, now seventy-five, has recently authored two very different books. *Rockets Galore*, in his lighter vein, wittily satirizing bureaucrats and planners, is a companion to *Whisky Galore*. *Thin Ice* treats with urbanity, compassion, and seriousness the social implications of a somber theme.

Bruce Marshall in *The Accounting* makes use of his own experience as a chartered accountant in Paris and he builds upon that experience a satirical detective story in which the junior auditors try to ferret out a rumored banking fraud. He succeeds in conveying both the dullness and excitement of the lives and ambitions of those in the business world, and the closing pages of the novel waver challengingly between climax and anti-climax.

Two books have come from the hand of that well-established and recog-

LONDON LETTER

nized novelist, Alfred Duggan. *Winter Quarters*, set against Roman times with two young Gauls as the principal characters, blends imagination and scholarship; there is the ring of authenticity and the style is economical. *Devil's Brood: The Angevin Family*, based on a legend of the house of Anjou, gains its effectiveness from the matter-of-fact manner in which Duggan relates a thoroughly spectacular story.

Often spoken of in almost the same breath as Greene and Waugh is Antonia White whose *Frost in May* long ago became a classic of convent school life. The novels that succeeded it have confirmed her reputation. However, her latest book is in a minor mode, for *Minka and Curdy* tells of the delightful rivalry of two irrepressible kittens, "marvellously observed" according to Elizabeth Bowen.

Of rising importance is Isobel English who has followed *The Key that Rusts*, which went into three editions, with a new novel, *Every Eye*. Widely praised for its style and focus, *Every Eye*, set in the Balearics, is a variation on the Proustian theme of *recherche du temps perdu* modified by contrasting the protagonist's happy present with her unhappy past.

A new novelist—though her long short story "The Portobello Road" was reprinted by Macmillan in the anthology *Winter's Tales* and also by *Botteghe Oscure* and though she has written books on Mary Shelley and on Emily Brontë—Muriel Spark brought out *The Comforters*. The novelist suggests that each of us has a distorted vision of other people because of our own neuroticisms. Evelyn Waugh has hailed Muriel Spark as "brilliantly original."

One is almost accustomed to expect the unexpected from Aubrey Menen, and the subtitle of his latest witty book, *The Abode of Love*, maintains that tradition: "the conception, financing, and daily routine of an English harem in the middle of the nineteenth century." Menen is living in Italy and according to rumor is working on a new novel, possibly to be called *Angelina in Malabar*. Reportedly it combines romance with satire and is set during the Crusades.

Among the youngest of the Catholic writers, though his reputation is well established, is Vincent Cronin, the son of A. J. Cronin. His latest book *The Last Migration* is somewhere between fiction and fact. A study of tribal traditions in Persia in conflict with the centralizing government, it was highly praised by *The Month*: "His book on Sicily proved his sensitiveness and accuracy of observation: that on Father Ricci in China his industrious research: and highly imaginative and densely populated as this book is, we feel we can trust the author's understanding even of the Persian's ways of thought and subtle forms of expression." Neville Braybrooke went so far as to say, "Cronin has done for Persia in *The Last Migration* what Lawrence did for the Arabs in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*."

RENASCENCE

English Catholics have an important past to emphasize and Philip Caraman, S.J., editor of *The Month*, has been busy making it vivid. He has followed his *John Gerard* and *William Weston* with a new volume, *Henry Morse: Priest of the Plague*.

There have also been important studies or editions of some of the important Catholic literary figures. Christopher Devlin's *The Life of Robert Southwell*, admirable for its scholarship as well as for its style, is a study of the martyr-poet. Newman has attracted several scholars. Henry Tristram of the Oratory drew on unpublished material in the Birmingham archives for *John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings*. Foreseeing the possibility of later biographical misrepresentation, Newman several times during his life—and not merely when he wrote his *Apologia*—attempted to set down his own recollections of the events in which he was involved. Included in the new volume are all the autobiographical materials, now complete and unexpurgated, which Newman left behind in his rooms when he died. While much of this material was used by Anne Mozley and by Wilfrid Ward, they necessarily had to select only portions, and the former sometimes suppressed more than discretion justified. The full materials are indispensable to a definitive interpretation of Newman.

Nine hitherto unpublished Catholic sermons appeared as *Catholic Sermons of Cardinal Newman*. There have also been several anthologies. Geoffrey Tillotson edited *Newman: Prose and Poetry*. Some one hundred letters—half of them from Newman's Anglican days—were edited and introduced by Derek Stanford and Muriel Spark as *Letters of John Henry Newman*; however, all but two of the letters had been previously published.

Newman once wrote, "I am not a politician," but Terence Kenny has written an interesting book, *The Political Thought of Newman*, dealing with the recurrent problems of liberalism and conservatism as viewed by Newman.

An enlarged edition of *Further Letters of Hopkins* was edited by Claude Collee Abbott making available for the first time letters by Hopkins to his father and mother. The new materials do not alter in any essentials the broad outlines of the established portrait of Hopkins, but they introduce minor qualifications, help to fill in backgrounds, add occasional highlights.

Two studies of Patmore have come forth. The first and less important, emphasizing Patmore as a man of contradictions and paradoxes, is by E. J. Oliver; the second, *The Mind and Art of Coventry Patmore*, is of major importance though perhaps it does not come within the ambit of this letter because its author, J. C. Reid, is a New Zealander.

Of only minor importance is Eleanor and Reginald Jebb's *Testimony to Hilaire Belloc*, but very deservedly Robert Speaight's *The Life of Hilaire Belloc* captured the front page of TLS. This book is certainly of major significance,

LONDON LETTER

and Hollis and Carter have announced that this year they will publish *Letters from Hilaire Belloc* selected by Speaight.

Sir Arnold Lunn has written not only *Enigma: A Study of Moral Re-Armament* but also another book of memoirs, *Memory to Memory*, agreeably desultory in design and full of the warmth of good talk and reminiscence.

Another autobiographical work is G. B. Stern's *The Way It Worked Out* which is a sequel to *All in Good Time* and which outlines the story of the novelist's conversion and her Catholic experiences.

Something of a surprise to many was contained in the tribute to the late Abbess of Stanbrook edited by her community under the title *In a Great Tradition*, because in it was to be found her correspondence with George Bernard Shaw indicating that the Irish playwright was capable at times of an unexpected humility.

That the English are often fond of Italy is evidenced by Bernard Wall's *Italian Art, Life and Landscape* which has the faults of being both discursive and sketchy because it tries to do everything within the limits of two hundred pages. Harold Acton's *The Bourbons of Naples* is a successful portrait of the Bourbons as they appeared to their contemporaries between 1734 and 1825. Ill health has prevented the greatest of the English Catholic historians, Christopher Dawson, from being very productive recently. He recently came to the United States to assume his post at Harvard University as Chauncey Stillman Professor of Roman Catholic Theological Studies; Dawson is the first to occupy this newly-created chair.

An interesting attempt to rehabilitate a frequently misunderstood figure is *Doctor Rabelais* by D. B. Wyndham Lewis, while Christopher Hollis has turned to a contemporary in *A Study of George Orwell*. Hollis knew Orwell at Eton and his book becomes an important study of the plight of the liberal in the modern world. With diligent scholarship Douglas Woodruff looks back with fascination in his *The Tichborne Claimant*.

English Catholics have occasionally contributed importantly to art criticism; Sir John Rothenstein, Director of the Tate Gallery, brought out *Modern English Painters: Lewis to Moore*, a companion to his earlier volume which had the same title but was subtitled "Sickert to Smith." The new volume presents personal judgments on sixteen recent artists.

As one looks back over the panorama of the English Catholic revival starting with Newman, one notes enviably that each generation has been producing important literary figures. The generation of Hopkins, Thompson, Patmore, and the Meynells was succeeded by Chesterton and Belloc. They, in turn, were succeeded by Waugh, Greene and Sitwell. The question challengingly open is: Who are their successors?

Imagery in Modern Marian Poetry

By Mother Anita von Wellsheim, R.S.C.J.

THE sign of a Woman stands at the dawn of history; the sign of a Woman points to its zenith. The Woman foreseen to crush the head of the serpent after the tragedy of Genesis is she who is clothed with the sun in the triumph of the Apocalypse. Both visions are prophetic; both prophecies fulfilled, yet unfulfilled. But the image of the Woman rises as a sunburst over the horizon of man, for she is the *forma Dei* who has encompassed the God-Man.

Her name is spelled in images, for beauty is a challenge to the language of men. "An image," St. John Damascene asserts in his *Treatise on Holy Images*, "is a likeness of an original with a certain difference." To the poet images are a vital necessity. For since every poetic experience is unique, the inadequacy of existing words results in the poetic impulsion to fuse things both similar and dissimilar into a new unity, making imagery the very heart and life of poetry. But if imagery is the language of poetry, it is still more that of religion, whose expression becomes possible only through the use of symbols. Now if our minds seek analogies in the things that surround them, or between various realms of being, they do so because their ultimate norm is the eternal Word, Image of the invisible God, Divine Exemplar of all beauty.

Second only to the Word of God is the Mother of God, supreme masterpiece of the Divine Art. "Tota pulchra es" proclaims God of this one creature alone. And since words can but limpingly portray such transcendent spiritual beauty, numerous and varied are the figures resorted to by all generations in their attempts worthily to call her blessed. The poet, then, enamoured of the beauty of God's Mother, with his native language of imagery is best equipped to fulfill the Virgin's prophecy. This he has done in uninterrupted Mary-song from the days of St. Ephrem to our own.

To understand modern poetry it must be seen in the light of tradition. For, as has been said, to try to do without tradition is to reduce our modern poetry to poverty. Marian poetry, being of its nature closely related to religious dogma, is in a way even more bound to tradition. Such imagery tends to partake of the sacredness of the truth it imparts. Hence it is all the more difficult for Marian poetry to assert its autonomy over tradition, while remaining deeply religious and fundamentally traditional.

To assert such an autonomy, however, is essential if our Marian poetry is to be truly modern, genuinely true to its age. One authority, Stephen J. M.

MARIAN POETRY

Brown, S.J., remarks in *The World of Imagery*: "Literary genres that have prevailed at certain periods are distinguishable mainly by their use of imagery or their relation to it." Can modern Marian poetry claim the distinction of being a true literary genre? If so, in what sense, and to what elements must this distinction be attributed? The best point of entry into his problem lies in a consideration of the imagery, traditional and new, of modern Marian poetry.

THE sources of Marian imagery are as vast as the universe and as old: Holy Scripture, nature, and human life. Exhaustive, yet far from exhausted, this tradition is as rich and fruitful for the modern poet as for his predecessors, but the poet will be modern only insofar as he succeeds in fashioning a new creation out of this old material. By "modern," therefore, only that contemporary or recent Marian poetry which seems to be true to the genuine voice of our age is here signified. As likeness and difference lie at the root of all imagery, varying degrees of one and the other constitute varying types of imagery. Since a particular affinity between image and object seems to characterize all pre-modern Marian imagery, it is in this sense that the term "traditional" is here applied to Marian imagery.

Our consideration of Scriptural Marian imagery may well begin with the prolonged query of Sister Maris Stella, S.S.J., in her tumbling "Lines for a Feast of Our Lady": "What shall be added to your praises?" For what, indeed, can one contribute to the "fertile flowering" of twenty centuries? A hint at the answer, however, may be found in this very poem, for even in its bright array of traditional images a spirit of familiarity, a light and conversational tone, contrast strongly with earlier dignified images weighted down with theological explanations. The first of all Marian prophecies, "She Shall Crush Thy Head," hitherto oddly overlooked in poetry, is dramatized with admirable expansion of image by Alexander Wyse, O.F.M., while the Book of Proverbs contains favorite passages for poetic commentary and reverently familiar paraphrase on the part of modern poets, as in M. W. Greenslade's "For the Immaculate Conception." It is as "Seat of Wisdom" that Sister Madeleva delights to hail our Queen, replacing the biblical "house," however, with such significant epithets as "nest," "womb," "retreat." New and Old Testament often merge, as one dominant image is spun out into several related ones.

A comparison of ancient, medieval, and romantic with modern Scriptural images reveals a prevading sense of intimacy in the modern. In portraying the Divine Motherhood it is the interior relationship of Mother and Son that absorbs Rosamond Haas in "The Annunciation." In singing "For Mary, Mother of Good Counsel," Sister Agnes, C.S.J., touches on the boldly tender as she reveals with striking clarity the mystery of Mary's spiritual maternity. Caryll Houslander, in her "Litany to Our Lady," shows how effectively Scripture and Liturgy can be woven together in an imagery of thought and relationship.

without parallel in earlier poetry. With equal unity and word-economy Jessica Powers images the strength of the Queen, "Terrible as an Army," by a series of powerful metaphors centered about the army-image. As sun-clothed Woman the Queen of heaven and earth shines forth in all ages of poetry. Though lacking its lofty and wordy exuberance of old, this image today acquires new charm and grace in the simplicity displayed in the brief lines entitled "Ave," by Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O. P.

If the Holy Spirit has lavishly laden the Scriptures with symbols of His Immaculate Bride, He has been even more prodigal of image in creation. Starting with the lowly earth, to the poet all nature speaks of her. To Adam of St. Victor earth symbolized virginity and humility, as shown in his "Salve Mater Salvatoris." Gertrude von le Fort, on the contrary, meditating on "Christmas," rejoices that the "daughter of my earth" is "wings of my earth" and in her exaltation has exalted all men. The praise of the seasons belongs peculiarly to modern poetry, and its charm is enhanced by James F. Cotter, S.J., in "The Year of Mary," through the use of personification in its delicate symbolism. But Gerard Manley Hopkins immortalizes Mary's claim to one season above all when, grasping its "inscape" or spiritual significance, he makes May speak to us of profound affinity with the Mother's joy, in his "May Magnificat." To quote the climax only:

When drop-of-blood-and-foam-dapple
Bloom lights the orchard-apple
And thicket and thorp are merry
With silver-surfèd cherry

And azuring-over greybell makes
Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes
And magic cuckoocall
Caps, clears, and clinches all —

This ecstasy all through mothering earth
Tells Mary her mirth till Christ's birth
To remember and exultation
In God who was her salvation.

In his "Rosa Mystica" Hopkins again displays the modern fondness for and ingenuity in developing by vivid and delicate expansion the images handed down by tradition. To the modern poet, moreover, Mary is everything that signifies life: a mountain stream, a field of cane, anointed grain, as pointed out by Albert Hebert, S.J., in "Our Lady." Without elaboration, these images convey their own message by the most direct, and hence poetic, use of metaphor.

In place of the dove, long associated with Our Lady, appears Sister Agnes, C.S.J.'s conception of "Mary Compared to a Mother Bird," reflecting the tenderness of the Mother's appeal to the modern poet. In water, Our Lord's own

MARIAN POETRY

symbol of life, poets have never failed to find images of the Mother of Life. But Robert Farren, using the spring as his point of departure, rises through a chain of images to the heights of her throne, with "Mary" mirrored in every link. In "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe" the genius of Hopkins has given us a master-image of that dearest of Marian dogmas to the Marian poet: her spiritual motherhood. Jessica Powers expresses that maternity, so intensely personal and intimate, as "Cloud of Carmel"; in it are found light, shade, protection, purity, secrecy of soul—all that best mirrors that marvelous motherhood. Though all the heavenly bodies are shown to reflect her splendor, the modern age's preference for light and its preoccupation with the interior mystery of Mary is seen in its most contemplative aspect in "And in Her Morning," by the same author. Thus does all nature sing its canticle of praise to the supreme image of Divine Beauty.

As Mother of God, who has lived our human life, not even all Scripture and all nature can fully tell that beauty. Earlier poets have sensed this by occasional allusions to the Mother mirrored in human things, but the modern poet delights in manifesting his Mother's love for all the simple, ordinary details bound up with earthly living. Thus, in "Lady of Lidice," Fray Angelico Chavez envisions her "the remembering lover/of every small town," while Joyce Kilmer addresses "A Blue Valentine" to a saint of the heavenly court telling his love for her. More profoundly, in her statue stationed by the stair Mother Margaret Williams, R.S.C.J., glimpses the meaning of time, that most elusive factor in modern life. Here, Our Lady's gold veil becomes the morning light, interpreted as time, "Wheeling about your wholeness," in a vivid symbolical interpretation. In the lowliest and most useful labors are seen the most perfect reflections of Mary's spiritual offices. To John L. Fiala, in "The Mary Hymn," she is "Wondrous baker of Bread," "Keeper of the Wine Cellar," "Weaver of the Cloth." Art, too, finds its prototype in Mary as Sister Maryanna, O. P., asks to be made "A Lute for Our Lady," and Raymond F. Roseliép hails her "Lady of Letters," Laureate of the Word.

With a minimum of imagery and a maximum of identification the modern poet finds the answer to Mary's sorrows in the strength they bring to bear his own. Nor does Edmund L. Binsfield, C.P.P.S., in his "War Pieta," make any distinction between the sorrows of the Mother and those of her spiritual son. Likewise all human joys are seen by Sister Mary Ignatius, C.S.J., to flow from and fuse into "Our Lady of Victories." In themes of death and destruction, such as Robert Menth's "Cry from the Battlefield," it is not so much the suffering as the helplessness of man in the guise of her Son that makes its appeal to the Mother. By such devices of imagery the mystical identification of the members with the Head pleads powerfully with the Mother of sorrow and of joy.

The modern manner of expressing the perennial wonder of that birth ineffable which brought us life is in delicate, symbolic metaphor which makes material objects tell wonders that are wholly spiritual. Impressionistic, suggestive, "She Walks," by Joseph Joel Keith, leads us straight into the virginal adoration of the Mother's heart. In contrast to the joyous exuberance of Cra-shaw's celebrated lines on the Assumption, the same desire to follow this incomparable Mother to regions beyond our gaze today finds expression in the hushed terms of reverent awe found in Alfred Barrett, S.J.'s "Mary's Assumption," and in "The Immaculate Heart," into which sanctuary we are led by Jessica Powers:

I enter this pure area where light
 Dwells by divine election, and I go
 Into the long noon of her adoration
 Where an eternal silence drifts like snow.
 There are no words here save the Word of God
 Pondered on without syllable or stir,
 Nor do I speak save by determined presence.
 I kneel down in the Virgin's radiation
 And gaze at God with her.

The spirit of modern traditional Marian poetry may be summed up as one of loving intimacy, dependence, and reverent familiarity. A new unity and simplicity are attained through a more direct use of metaphor and the expansion of images. Modern poets reveal the inner meaning and beauty of Mary by the power of identification, the spiritualization of material objects, and a highly suggestive use of symbolism. Having produced a spirit clearly its own, attributable only to its use of imagery, this modern traditional Marian poetry may be said to merit the title of a distinct genre.

NOT all modern Marian imagery may be called traditional, however. The presence of a dominant element of difference between object and image makes for a type of imagery that is new in Marian poetry, though not new to poetry in general. It aims at bringing out truth by contrast or conflict, and differs from traditional imagery not in degree but in kind. While this new imagery may not at first be as pleasing to the conventional mind, for it is a departure, its poets are trying to enhance in our eyes the beauty of the Woman by reflecting it in new combinations of the same inexhaustible sources. A glance at their efforts may reveal whether they succeed merely in innovating, or in producing not only a *distinct* but a *new* genre of Marian poetry.

In Francis Thompson's "The After Woman" is seen an unmistakable harbinger of the new image, though the poem is indeed prophetic in more than its imagery. The Scriptural images hidden in these lines can be heard in their fullness only by an attentive ear. With surprising effect the poet unites "Trait-

MARIAN POETRY

ress," "Tempt," "cajoleries," with their opposite poles: "heavenly traitress," "Tempt . . . to paradise," "sacrosanct cajoleries." These are not traditional associations based on similarity, but contrasts, founded on opposing elements, which rank Thompson first in time among the makers of the new image.

Chesterton, justly recognized as the Marian poet of our age, knew how to defend, in "Images," the image of the Woman in harsh words of contrast between physical destruction and spiritual immortality, forcing upon the mind the indestructable beauty of God's predestined house of Wisdom. Again, in ardent defense of the Mother of God, Chesterton let loose against her attacker perhaps the most devastating lines that ever flowed from his prolific pen when, in "A Party Question," he unmasked the malice of her enemies as, "The little hiss that only comes from hell." In one scathing line this singing champion of Mary has epitomized the ancient and modern enmity between Satan and the Woman. Yet Chesterton seems never so characteristically himself as in "A Little Litany," in each image of which is felt a herculean effort to illustrate the impossible, to reconcile the widest extremes involved in the paradox of paradoxes—the Mother of God:

When God turned back eternity and was young
Ancient of Days, grown little for your mirth
(As under the low arch the land is bright)
Peered through you, gate of heaven—and saw the earth.

Or shutting out his shining skies awhile
Built you about him for a house of gold
To see in pictured walls his storied world
Return upon him as a tale is told.

Or found his mirror there, the only glass
That would not break with that unbearable light
Till in a corner of the high dark house
God looked on God, as ghosts meet in the night.

Even bolder examples of the new imagery are found in the poems of Robert Lowell, most of which represent the complex fusion of the Scriptural, religious, colloquial, traditional, and audacious. In "fair and bloody day," Mary compared to Nimrod, and the "Dead" signifying the Living Bread, from "On the Eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception," the reader is left to make the connections, and on reflection is amazed at the strength of their impact. The same poet's description of "Our Lady of Walsingham" presents a still more startling variety of the new image from Scriptural sources. This modern poet is all for reality. After shocking the reader by the undisguised unloveliness of this venerated statue, he further startles him by applying to it a Scriptural verse traditionally associated with Christ in His Passion. All this, however, heightens the climax: "Expressionless, expresses God," where in a flash is dis-

RENASCENCE

covered the beauty beyond surface, above "castled Sion." For her knowledge is God's, and the splendor of that truth alone will draw all the world to the wonderful Woman whom God calls "Mother."

The Scriptural image of the Mother of Men is also found in Lowell's poetry. Here, however, the notes of grimness, strength, and boldness combine to form an impression that is far more knotty and elusive, as is evident in "A Prayer for My Grandfather to Our Lady," and "As a Plane Tree by the Water." Such poems reveal the virtuosity that Marian poetry can take in the hands of one of the newest of the new image-makers.

Nature is as fruitful a source of the new Marian image as of the traditional, and Thomas Merton is, perhaps, its exponent *par excellence*. In his "Canticle of the Blessed Virgin," so replete also with images from Scripture and Liturgy, he offers some of the freshest and most interesting examples. Such figures as "chaste as lightning," "kinder than June," uniting human qualities with inanimate objects are highly intuitive and constitute a type of image which gives new depth to Marian poetry. In "For the Time Being," W. H. Auden has a profound passage in a dialogue between Mary and Gabriel, which derives its extraordinary power from the use of this same type of highly intuitive image. Here, however, nature, mostly inanimate, is made to do the impossible, as,

Light blazes out of stone,
The taciturn water
Burst into music,
And warm wings throb within
The motionless rose:
What sudden rush of Power
Commands me to command?

Besides the forcible impact conveyed by these conflicting images, the very impossibility of the figures, physically speaking, is an image of the natural impossibility of the message brought to Mary, and mirrors her mental state as she speaks these words. Is there not here a kind of double imagery, in which nature itself speaks, pictorially on one level, symbolically on another?

In T. S. Eliot's poems nature plays an even more symbolic role. It seems legitimate to see in the "veiled sister" of "Ash Wednesday" an image of the Woman, yet its "yew trees," its "blue rocks," and the "last desert" present a nature suggestive rather than real, and subtle in emotional overtones. This is a symbolism of complex relationships, rich in tradition, rich in the new, subtle in both. Eliot's rose, in which the Lady is imaged in the second part of the poem, is typical of the method and the effort of his imagery, the union of tradition with the new. Contrast is the law of this Lady-lyric, yet there is a richness in the contrasting and highly intuitive images that makes Eliot the greatest exponent of this new imagery.

The "red lily" of Chesterton, from "The Return of Eve," must be given a

MARIAN POETRY

high place in this new nature imagery, not that Chesterton's poetry can be likened to Eliot's, but because the "red lily" is a highly intuitive image dominating a host of traditional images which makes its impact powerfully felt. And whereas in traditional poetry each season tells its praise of Mary, in the new, Merton gives a unified voice to all the seasons, temporal and liturgical, in his description of the monks' approach to Vespers of an "Evening: Zero Weather." Apart from its numerous highly intuitive images, the climax alone is a magnificent example of the blending of differences, of opposites of time, into a union which symbolizes eternity. By this unusual reunion of opposing seasons the reader feels that he, too, is entering "our blazing heaven" through an eternal Assumption.

As summary of all nature's homage to Mary in the new imagery, Merton gives us "Aubade—The Annunciation" and the "Canticle for the Blessed Virgin," two poems which present an ecstatic chorus of nature singing in its clearest and strongest accents. By the fusion and destruction of widely separated lights the author "burns them into gold for you, great Virgin,/Coining your honor in the glorious sun." Chesterton crowns this burning tribute of nature with such glowing lines in "The Black Virgin" that we now stand face to face with the new image of the sun-clothed Woman, this time completely dazzling in her array of conflicting lights. Yet, though dazed by this coalition of conflicts in the new image, as by the beauty of the Woman herself, we cannot doubt that its brilliance has shocked our minds into a more vivid realization of that beauty.

As the presence of the Woman in nature becomes more incisive in the new imagery than in the traditional, so does the new image disclose that presence in human things with a more profound insight. We need the poet's vision to redeem our familiar surroundings from the contempt they so often breed. Merton's "The Blessed Virgin Mary Compared to a Window" compels us to observe how pregnant with profound mystical import even the most neglected of objects can be. Here the strong contrasting and highly intuitive images combine with that type of expansion noted in traditional imagery. In one final powerful image, "smiles of blood," the significance of all the others is combined and hurled upon the mind with electrifying clarity. Thus by contrast, reversal, fusion, as well as comparison, Merton through the new imagery expands the image of the window to illustrate the role of Mary's Motherhood, as did Hopkins through traditional imagery and the expansion of the air-we-breathe image.

From Merton also is gained a new insight into Our Lady's attitude towards her surroundings. The scene is her flight over the hill country before "The Quickening of St. John the Baptist." On the surface how mixed and confused are the images of "the drowned shores of Galilee," "the sands and the lavender

water"! Yet they convey much to the mind about the mind of the Virgin at this moment. The lighter side of Our Lady's love of "little things" is revealed by Chesterton in "The Trinkets," as he turns the universe upside down for our tiny minds to conceive it as her plaything.

The new imagery in human life is not limited to the "ordinary" and the "little." It brings our Mother very close to every form of human toil and pursuit, as is seen in the powerful lines of John Louis Bonn, S.J., in "Madonna: 1936," addressed by the Laborer to the Lady, and the Lady to the Laborer, or in the piercing appeal of the Professor to "The Madonna of the Dons," by Arthur MacGillvray, S.J. Nor is the theologian excepted, whose thought Merton, in "Duns Scotus," shows to image the Lady who has crushed all heresies. Paul Claudel illustrates in the bold and daring lines of his "Fourth Station" how deeply the new image penetrates the Heart of the sorrowful Mother, as "she stands erect before God and gives Him her soul to read," and "as God Himself, she is there with her will to present." But again it is Chesterton who, in vivid imagery of contrast, makes clear how, by her very sorrow and compassion, Mary became Cause of our Joy just because she is "Queen of the Seven Swords." Robert Lowell brings us face to face with the grimmest picture of war and death in which the image of the Woman has yet appeared, when he describes "The Dead in Europe." Graphic, powerful, this imagery is also subtle in its undercurrents and crosscurrents of varied symbolic allusions combined with plain and bitter facts. All this synthesized with the acme of word-economy, the tragic truth bursts into our consciousness as the poet intended, and could not fail to make a powerful appeal to the Queen of Life and Death.

Never a singer of sorrow, in his unique way Chesterton reminds us that the lasting reality is not death but life, and he shows whence comes that life in "The Return of Eve." The baffling power of this imagery fuses extremes of history in an eternal moment. As the poet of the new image looks up to this Woman "made for the morning," he, too, finds her more clearly mirrored in figures of birth and life. Merton shows a particularly ravishing sight in the contest he portrays between the Hearts of Mother and Child, in "A Christmas Card," with lines of delicate insight:

And when His Lady Mother leans upon the crib,
Lo, with what rapiers
Those two loves fence and flame their brilliancy!

What a singularly accurate image of the unique Love that binds these Hearts inseparably! In "fence" is seen an image of opposition, while in "flame" is an image of union as well as of brilliance, the implication being rivalry resolved in supreme harmony.

As this cursory view of the new Marian imagery began with Thompson's tumbling figures of paradox, so it may fittingly end with the no less entrap-

MARIAN POETRY

tured, audacious and contradictory images of his "Assumpta Maria." In this feat of multiple and varied figures of contrast, contradiction, reversal, identification, drawn from Scripture, nature, and human life, the gates of heaven are lifted up to reveal once again the sun-clothed Woman, whose image is blazoned in burning figures by the poet of the new imagery. Thus Scripture, nature, and human life offer an abundance of material for the contrasting, conflicting and highly intuitive images which distinguish the new imagery. These, even when blended with traditional images, can be quickly detected as giving a peculiar depth and insight, as well as a more forceful emotional impact.

IT seems evident, therefore, that the image of the Woman in poetry cannot be restricted to traditional concepts, but that tradition has been enlarged and enhanced by the addition of a new type of imagery. The modern poet is no more innovating when he develops an imagery founded upon one of the intrinsic laws of imagery, dissimilarity, than the traditional poet was in creating an imagery based upon the other, similarity. Hence we welcome an imagery which sharpens our vision and injects fresh fire and vigor into the heart and life of Marian poetry. And whereas modern traditional Marian poetry, by reason of the peculiar spirit produced through its use of the imagery of similarity, deserves the title of a *distinct* genre, this new Marian imagery, founded upon the hitherto unexploited principle of dissimilarity, and producing a poetry that is uniquely its own, merits to be ranked as an entirely *new* genre of Marian poetry.

These two types, far from being antitheses are rather complements within that poetic genre which is modern Marian poetry. They argue such a growth in breadth and depth as augurs well for the future. For if we are privileged to live in the Age of Mary, we have not yet seen its full splendor. When that comes, may we not hope for the fullest flowering of Marian poetry? And in proportion as the profound reality and eternal significance of the Mother of God and of Men are unveiled by the theologian and assimilated by the faithful, ought there not to spring up a poetry that reproduces more of the hidden wonders of that beauty which delights the Heart of God?

In that time will be revealed, as fully as it is given to poetry to reveal, the glory, the majesty, the beauty that the Son of God,—Image of the Father, His Supreme Art and Divine Exemplar of all Beauty, reflects on His heavenly Mother. In that day heaven and earth will truly be burned into gold, coining the honor of the sun-clothed Woman. In that hour will appear a beauty that eye has not seen, in the image of the Woman—prelude to the Divine Advent itself. Then, finally, will come to pass the prophetic vision of the saints, the no less prophetic dream of the poet:

Then come the Isaian days; the old
Shall dream; and our young men behold
Vision—yea, the vision of Thabor mount,

RENASCENCE

Which none to other shall recount,
Because in all men's heart shall be
The seeing and the prophecy.
For ended is the Mystery Play,
When Christ is life and you the way;
When Egypt's spoils are Israel's right,
And Day fulfills the married arms of Night.
But here my lips are still.
Until
You and the hour shall be revealed,
This song is sung and sung not, and its words are sealed.

(Francis Thompson, "The After Woman")

Some Symbols of Death and Destiny in *Four Quartets*

By Sister Marie Virginia, O.P.

And any action
is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat
Or to an illegible stone. And that is where we start.

"Little Gidding"

There are other places
Which also are the world's end, some at the sea's jaws,
Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city—

"Little Gidding"

Also pray for those who were in ships, and
Ended their voyage on the sand, in the sea's lips
Or in the dark throat which will not reject them
Or wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell's
Perpetual angelus.

"The Dry Salvages"

THESE three passages from *Four Quartets* contain some interesting symbols which seem to me worthy of analysis. The surface meaning offers no difficulties. Death may come in any manner, in any place, at any moment, and every action man performs brings him one step nearer to death. The moment of death is the place from which we start, in the sense that every step a traveler takes from the time he sets out on his journey is pre-determined by the goal or destination he seeks.

It seems possible, however, that these particular symbols may also be interpreted as representing the four possible destinies which await the soul at death; destinies which depend, of course, upon the spiritual state of the soul at that crucial moment.

It will be noted that Eliot uses four symbols in each passage. These symbols are far from identical but the following arrangement will show that some of them are strikingly similar:

1. sea's throat	fire	illegible stone	block
2. sea's jaws	dark lake	desert	city
3. dark throat	sea's lips	sand	wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell's/Perpetual angelus

In all three passages the sea is used as a symbol of spiritual destruction. That such an interpretation is consistent with Eliot's use of sea imagery else-

RENASCENCE

where in his poetry may be easily shown. In *The Waste Land* it is "Death by Water" that is to be feared, and toward the end of the poem comes the ominous warning, "O you who turn the wheel and look to windward/Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you." In "Ash Wednesday" the siren voices of the sea are the voices of temptation luring the soul to spiritual death:

(Bless me father) though I do not wish to wish these things
From the wide window to the granite shore
The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying
Unbroken wings
And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices

In "Marina" man is threatened with spiritual shipwreck for which his own neglect is responsible:

Bowsprit cracked with ice and paint cracked with heat
I made this, I have forgotten
And remember
This rigging weak and the canvas rotten
Between one June and another September
Made this unknowing, half conscious, unknown, my own.
The garboard strake leaks, the seams need caulking.
This form, this face, this life . . .

In "The Dry Salvages" man seeks communion

Through the dark cold and empty desolation
The wave cry, the wind cry, and the vast waters
Of the petrol and the porpoise.

In *Murder in the Cathedral*, "Winter shall come bringing death from the sea."

Examples such as these should be sufficient to show that Eliot frequently uses the sea as a symbol of spiritual destruction. In the passages under consideration here the sea is pictured as a monster with wide-open jaws waiting to devour man. This is a fitting symbol of the spiritual death awaiting those whose condition in life was one of complete "attachment to self and to things and to persons."

The symbol of fire is used to represent the destiny of those who at the moment of death find themselves in need of further purification. Fire is frequently used by Eliot as a symbol of a purifying force. In "East Coker" for example:

If to be warmed, then I must freeze
And quake in frigid purgatorial fires
Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars.

In "Little Gidding":

From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.

FOUR QUARTETS

And another passage from the same poem reads:

Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human hands cannot remove
We only live only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.

In these passages fire is used as symbolic of the purifying fire of suffering. Man is led by every action he performs toward the fire of love through the fire of suffering. The only alternative is to give himself up to the fire of hate—which is damnation.

The "dark lake" is also an appropriate symbol for the state or place of purgation. A lake is less perilous than the open sea. Those in need of purification are not lost, but they are temporarily submerged in the dark lake of suffering. Similarly, those in need of further purification have not yet gone down the "dark throat which will not reject them"; they have reached only the "sea's lips," a less precarious position from which there remains the possibility of escape.

The "illegible stone," the "desert," and the "sand" are fitting symbols of the destiny awaiting those who have never known the regenerating waters of spiritual life. The fate of the unbaptized, the invincibly ignorant, is an enigma aptly symbolized by an "illegible stone"—a figure which suggests a stone upturned in the desert, covered with hieroglyphics no one can decipher. All through his poetry Eliot uses the desert as a symbol of spiritual sterility. In "The Hollow Men" the materialistic civilization of the modern world is portrayed by the imagery of the desert:

This is the dead land
This is cactus land
Here the stone images
Are raised . . .

In "The Waste Land" the same symbolism is used:

What are these roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.

In "Ash Wednesday" the denial of spiritual realities takes place

In the last desert between the last blue rocks
The desert in the garden the garden in the desert
Of drouth . . .

The condition of those who are either unaware of spiritual realities or indifferent to them is a condition of

RENASCENCE

indifference

Which resembles the others as death resembles life,
Being between two lives—unflowering, between
The live and the dead nettle.

The "block" is an apt symbol for the destiny of the martyr. It is a symbol which recalls ". . . three men/And more on the scaffold." It suggests also the fate of Mary Stuart whose motto runs like a refrain through "East Coker." The martyr and the saint follow a path which leads to happiness through suffering. The complete giving of self, the total self-surrender of the saint is possible only for those who have fought relentlessly to attain a state of complete "detachment from self and from things and from persons." A different but no less appropriate symbol for the destiny of those who have reached this state of complete detachment is that of the "city." It suggests, of course, the city of the Heavenly Jerusalem described by St. John in the Apocalypse, or St. Augustine's City of God. In the third passage "wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell's/Perpetual angelus" symbolizes any state or destiny beyond the reach of death. The sea bell's perpetual angelus is the "calamitous annunciation" of death to which reference is made in an earlier passage of "The Dry Salvages." In contrast to this is the "hardly, barely payable/Prayer of the one Annunciation" which is, of course, the message of the Incarnation with its implicit promise of life-after-death. The only destiny completely and irrevocably beyond the reach of death is that eternal life in heaven which awaits the martyr and the saint.

Rereading these passages with this symbolism in mind, one finds the following three levels of meaning:

1. The literal meaning. The symbols represent nothing more than man's uncertainty concerning the manner and place of death.
2. The symbols represent the four possible spiritual states in which man's soul may be found at the moment of death.
3. The symbols represent the four possible destinies which await the soul after death.

This may be illustrated more clearly perhaps by the following arrangement:

<i>Complete attachment</i>	<i>Partial attachment</i>	<i>Indifference</i>	<i>Complete detachment</i>
1. sea's throat	fire	illegible stone	block
2. sea's jaws	dark lake	desert	city
3. dark throat	sea's lips	sand	wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell's/Perpetual angelus
<i>Hell</i>	<i>Purgatory</i>	<i>Limbo</i>	<i>Heaven</i>

FOUR QUARTETS

In the light of this interpretation the theme of the whole poem becomes more meaningful. Every action man performs helps to develop in his soul that spiritual state which will determine his eternal destiny. His thirst for union with God, his craving for the delights of contemplation, his search for that moment in and out of time which can be tasted only by one who has reached "A condition of complete simplicity/(Costing not less than everything)" are all seen to be dependent upon the decision of the present moment. One becomes more conscious than before of the significance of present action; one realizes more fully that

'on whatever sphere of being
The mind of man may be intent
At the time of death'—that is the one action
(And the time of death is every moment)
Which shall fructify in the lives of others . . .

For those who strive to live in a state of complete detachment from the things of this world, all things are viewed in the light of eternity. Grace is the seed of glory, and for the saint eternity has already begun; time is timeless; eternity is now, and "The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew tree/Are of equal duration . . ."

Herbert and Hopkins: Two Lyrics

BY SISTER M. JOSELYN, O.S.B.

TWO religious lyrics which invite comparison and between them set up a rich interplay of resemblances and contrasts are the "Affliction (1)" of Herbert and the "Carrion Comfort" of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Taking into account the centuries which lie between the two men and noting all the differences in their theology and religious sensibility, one nevertheless perceives at first glance that both poets are reporting the same kind of experience, a trial of faith more or less intense (and more or less well known among all sincere believers), favorably resolved at the end though at the cost of severe personal sacrifice. Yet in tenor and decorum, every nuance and strategy of feeling, the two poems could hardly differ more.

While Hopkins' report of his trial is headlong, passionate, and narrowly self-regarding, carrying the feeling of torture in its very sound and appearance and accomplishing its resolution only at the cost of crushed bones and flung flesh, Herbert's account of the trial of faith is leisurely, urbane, more than a little wry, encompassing a wide stretch of world and time, a delicate mobile-like balance of conflicting attitudes. Hopkins' experience may or may not have been as rigidly enclosed around the self, as violently univocal as the poem reports it to be, but his sonnet has sacrificed almost everything to the breathless intensity of the one single suffering he wishes to embody. On the other hand, Herbert's strategy (and sensibility) is entirely different and basically involves, I think, three perspectives, three mirror-like insights on the one experience. While Hopkins' poem shows us one man undergoing one experience and through the conventions of poetic art reporting it as he undergoes it, in Herbert's poem we have at least three points of view working with an effect of simultaneity. In "Affliction" we read (1) Herbert's straightforward chronological account of the facts and events involved in his life story, or those parts of it which are important, (2) Herbert's shifting attitude or attitudes toward the life as a whole and toward each of its stages, and (3) God's attitude (really Herbert's again though he enables us not to think of that) toward the events reported by Herbert and toward Herbert's interpretation of them. In other words, we have Herbert seeing his "historical," "public," or "official" self, Herbert seeing his "subjective" self, and God seeing and commenting not only on these two selves but by implication on another "real" self. Yet it is Herbert who shows us all this—and all of it in the same general framework, the world ruled by God in His providence. How are the perspectives managed?

HERBERT AND HOPKINS

Let us return for a moment to Hopkins' sonnet. We have said that Hopkins' world-within-the-poem is severely self-regarding, to some readers even narcissistic. To this statement two qualifications must be added. Is any experience or any self, however small, really narrow when it is seen in relation to God theologically conceived as Hopkins conceives Him, or does not this relation once it is so much as named tend to extend the self and the experience to infinity? (We leave aside the question of the illegitimate exploitation of this relationship in much religious verse). Hopkins' immediate plan of operation is to set up a Despair vs. Self antipathy, later shifting the equation to Despair vs. Self vs. God and then to Self vs. Despair-who-is-God-in-disguise, a common enough kind of paradox in religious writing and one not too different from the point of Herbert's denouement. But Hopkins' experience is still relatively self-enveloping, even within the terms of the paradox. In the most exact sense, no one exists in the world except God and His antagonist, the soul.

The second qualification to the statement that "Carrian Comfort" is exclusively self-regarding and self-enclosed is that Hopkins does indeed allude to certain experiences, a kind of past, lying outside the immediate action of the poem, reflecting upon it and tending to open up at least the severely limited time-perspective of the sonnet. Early in the poem, "these last strands of man/ In me" and "can no more" point to a period of trial preceding the final combat which makes up the main action of the sonnet. Later, in "all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod/ . . . my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy" and in "the hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot trod/ Me" there is clearer (but not specific) reference to a past of more or less duration preceding the experience of the poem and placing it in the light of a climax. The even more pointed "That night, that year/ Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling" curiously pushes into the past the very event that Hopkins has been striving so mightily to keep in the present.

It may be questioned here whether the sonnet gains or loses by these momentary, fragmented, even contradictory time-allusions. Certainly the perspectives are not handled with the same kind of finesse Herbert displays, for in "Carrian Comfort" the combat-experience remains tightly enclosed around the two antagonists, and what account of the past there is is presented under one light only, that of the all-encompassing struggle. Yet in lines like "Cheer whom though? the hero . . . / or me that fought him?" in which the action moves from present to past, and then immediately back to present with "O which one? is it each one?" there is a dizzying swing of movement which does much to intensify the feeling of vertiginous terror that the writer so well conveys throughout the poem. Certainly in contrast with Herbert, Hopkins keeps his time-allusions general and offers next to no interpretation of the events they describe, for the poem, to survive, must be kept moving in the present. Neither can Hopkins

afford in a sonnet the ambling pace, the pauses to reflect and edit, which Herbert's sixty-six lines allow. Perhaps the main function of the allusions to the past in "Carrion Comfort," however, is to universalize at least in terms of time a report which might otherwise be purely *sui generis*.

In "Affliction" Herbert's handling of past time accomplishes with great economy three different things. Besides firmly locating the spiritual combat between the soul and God in an orderly and domesticated universe and gaining from the reader his complete credence for a sober-sounding life history, Herbert is able to achieve the special mirror-like interpretations and counter-interpretations of experience which color the poem with its peculiar richness and sophistication. "Affliction" begins forthrightly with the start of the soul's service of God — "When first thou didst entice to thee my heart" — but note the immediate though unobtrusive interpretation of the event in "entice" and in the ironic (line 2) "*I thought the service brave*" [italics mine]. Early in the spiritual life, "I looked on thy furniture so fine" and "made it fine to me"; slightly later in this same period the protagonist's thoughts are "argu'd into hopes." In the first three stanzas of the poem, then, Herbert gives us both an account of his early experience and a version of it. Here already are two of the three mirrors. Later these events and the interpretation of them will receive an added significance when read in the light of the final resolution of the conflict between God and the soul in which the soul capitulates and accepts not only God's disposal of the outcome but of all that led up to it.

The second period of the spiritual life is portrayed as was the first in straightforward language. For thirteen lines or so we are in the realm of fact alone: "with my yeares sorrow did twist and grow," until it became "all my soul" and "My mirth and edge was lost." But an interesting new element of feeling enters in l. 35, a faint but unmistakable overtone of self-pity. (To portray one's sentiments to another in such a way that they appear both sentimental and serious at the same time is a feat for the metaphysical.) The soul postures a bit, feels sorry for itself, and begins to enjoy feeling sorry for itself. "Thus thinne and lean without a fence or friend,/ I was blown through with ev'ry storm and winde." Perhaps it is significant that the moment when the soul begins to sentimentalize or preen its own feelings coincides exactly with the moment in which it begins to see itself in no relation to God. At any rate it is not too much a leap from the mood of luxurious melancholy to one in which the soul becomes the accuser of God. "Thou didst betray me," "I was entangled in the world of strife,/ Before I had the power to change my life." The mood deepens to one of assumed independence and even rebellion in "I threatened oft the seige to raise." Yet this action remains only in the state of threat and only brings the soul to where "I could not go away nor persevere." Here is a plain if forced admission that God still rules, for Herbert knows

HERBERT AND HOPKINS

perfectly well that God cannot be in the universe without exerting absolute claims upon the soul and moreover makes the claim clear in "I could not go away nor persevere." It is in these lines that we begin to see from the third perspective on the action, that of God. The third mirror is God's version of Himself speaking through the lines of the protagonist and interpreting them.

But the mood of the next to last stanza is very near a pout. "Now I am here, what thou wilt do with me/ None of my books will show"; "Well, I will change the service, and go seek/ Some other master out" — an alternative manifestly impossible since in every one of these crises in the past the soul came to where it "could not go away." In the light of this dilemma the only way out is the way ahead; let the soul once for all accept God's version of its experience past and present and at least now begin truly to love by seeing the hand of God in all things, even those which "cross - bias," cause suffering, and seem to indicate abandonment.

Herbert's struggle is carried out in a daylight world and a rather spacious and gracious one, well peopled and interesting in its own right. It is not a place of carrion, tempests, bruised bones, lionlimbs, great crushing and wrenching actions carried on in the night, of monsters with darksome devouring eyes who may turn out to be hero and God. Herbert's world is full of "naturall delights," a "world of mirth," and for a time at least there is in it "no moneth but May." It is a world of friends, books, the town, of fruit-trees and "service brave." No space in "Carrion Comfort" is larger than a torture dungeon or a threshing floor; Herbert's universe is so large and so tamed that stars become God's "household-stuffe." For his figures Herbert turns to domestic objects, knives, birds' nests, pills, furniture, a game of bowls, but Hopkins finds his images almost exclusively in instruments of physical torture, rod, rope, "wring-world right foot," great winds and overpowering pressures. Hopkins' God is Despair turned hero; Herbert's is "master" and "King" but also "my deare God!"

Within the terms of his peculiar art, each poet is wrestling with the most common aspect of the problem of evil, the paradox of suffering and love. Both men resolve the problem within the framework of traditional Christian theology, and it is not difficult to imagine of Hopkins what we know to be true of Herbert, since in his last message to Nicholas Ferrar about his poems he called them "a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master, in whose service I have now found perfect freedom."

Review-Articles

One Wheel, All Square

The Letters of James Joyce. Edited by Stuart Gilbert. Viking. \$7.50.

A Census of Finnegans Wake: An Index of the Characters and Their Roles. By Adaline Glasheen. Northwestern University Press. \$5.00.

Joyce and Shakespeare: A Study in the Meaning of Ulysses. By William M. Shutte. Yale University Press. \$4.00.

Dedalus on Crete: Essays on the Implications of Joyce's Portrait. Saint Thomas More Guild, Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles.

The James Joyce Review, Vol. 1, No. 1. Edited by Edmund L. Epstein. \$1.00.

“**B**Y way of Clongowes Fr. Conmee used to say my letters home were like grocer's lists.” The reader of this volume will find it loaded with groceries, animal, vegetable, and mineral. No richer collection of letters exists. From one point of view the book is an unwitting indictment of our age. To those who have no first-hand assurance of Joyce's artistic stature this aspect of the volume will not prove very discomfiting. But Joyce's case with publishers, critics, and friends is a discouraging exemplum concerning the narrow limits of human perception and good will. Not that both of these were lacking entirely for Joyce. But they proved puny and useless to save him from frantic labors and misery. There would appear to be an intuitive recognition of all men of high vitality like Joyce, and a secret determination to make them pay for this power, even on the part of their friends of ordinary vitality. Have we not all seen fine artists surrounded by well-to-do well-wishers who relish the association but do nothing to relieve the daily plight of the artist? This is not the result of stupidity—not every time. There is a deep resentment of the artists' powers even among their closest friends.

As for the power of committees of philanthropic foundations to spot or support talent, no hope or help can possibly exist in that quarter until they entrust the whole operation to a secret service division. An anonymous gum-shoe squad disguised as beat-up bohemians might ferret out some genuine talent. But a James Joyce would never dream of applying to a Foundation for aid. Not while sweepstakes tickets are still available.

The figure of Harriet Shaw Weaver emerges in a most benign light, because her bequests to Joyce from 1917 led to his keeping her supplied with copies of his work as it progressed. Accompanying the samples of *Ulysses* and the *Wake* went his often detailed exegeses. It is a striking instance of that natural wish of the artist to instruct his patrons and consumers. As Joyce said, “My consumers are they not my producers?” But this wish to instruct the audience has been frustrated since the rise of the huge middle-class public after the Napoleonic wars. The middleman then appeared, to mediate between artist and over-sized public. And the middleman soon began to call the tune to both artist and public.

These exegeses of his own work supplied to Miss Weaver, which have been accessible to some critics already, are frequent in the present collection. They

REVIEW-ARTICLES

should be made available in a separate volume, together with similar comments (if any) for which room was not found in the present collection. It is these notes on his methods of work and expression which will put Joyce studies on a very different basis from now on: "I am writing Ithaca in the form of a mathematical catechism," begins his account of that matter. And of the *Wake*: "I am making an engine with only one wheel. No spokes of course. The wheel is a perfect square. You see what I'm driving at, don't you? . . . You must not think it is a silly story about the mouse and the grapes. No, it's a wheel, I tell the world. And its all *square*."

There is the impressive enactment of the twilight of madness descending on Swift for which Joyce provided Gilbert with a word by word key. Gilbert reprints the key. This item is followed by one of the most depressing things in all of English literature—namely, H. G. Wells's letter of appraisal to Joyce which begins, "My dear Joyce: I've been studying you and thinking over you a lot." The great pulpiteer and cooker-up of science-fiction takes us into his constabulary bosom and licks his pencil and marks his pad with deep sincerity and even deeper stupidity. Did not this crass mind once note the style of Henry James as the effort of an elephant to pick up a pea? Well, his letter to Joyce is the perfect example of the pea trying to pick up the elephant. It exceeds even the genteel fog and vulgarity of mind of Edmund Gosse, who was also led into undying public folly on the subject of Joyce.

When Wyndham Lewis portrayed the puny trivialities of Bloomsbury in *The Apes of God*, he was accused of wasting heavy artillery on petty subjects by the victims themselves. It all gives so spuriously to think.

Writing of the madness of his daughter Lucia, Joyce concludes, "I do wish I was settled in a home, sweet home with a piano to which I could sing Come into the garden Maud every evening at 6 p.m." There are terrible letters like the one about Lucia which concludes, "I do not like you to mention her in the same breath with my cousin or sister or anybody else. If she could be so mentioned then it is I who am mad." Nothing could be more touching than the Italian letter written to Lucia and translated into English by her: "But the flower that is born from our land takes some time to grow and one does not see immediately the true sense of the proceedings . . . I am slow O yes. 8 years to write a book and 18 for its successor. But I will understand in the end." The endocrine ailment which destroyed Lucia, Joyce was able to spot in time in the case of the daughter of Siegfried Giedion. What the doctors were unable to do for Lucia Joyce, he was able to do for Miss Giedion. Dr. Giedion told me this himself.

There is in a letter to Miss Weaver a wonderful parody of *The Waste Land*, which contains such lines as:

I heard mosquitoes swarm in old Bordeaux
So many!
I had not thought the earth contained so many
(Hurry up, Joyce, it's time) . . .
But we shall have great times,
When we return to Clinic, that waste land
O Escalapios!
(Shan't we? Shan't we? Shan't we?)

Is it not ridiculous that people should deprive themselves of the pleasure of

knowing that they have lived with greatness? Joyce, Eliot, Pound, Lewis, Yeats—these figures are not just national but global giants whose work our words and thoughts and feelings have nourished. But the greatest of these is Joyce. And the *Letters* are now here to elucidate that fact.

A Census of Finnegans Wake tackles Joyce's alchemy of the word from a special point of view: "The Earwickers play human history in a series of dramatic roles in the manner of actors in old stock companies Much of the fun of *Finnegans Wake* hangs on the Earwickers being such very bad actors. They will not sink their own clamorous voices in their parts, they continually break off their lines to address the audience or rail at one another. Characters from one drama wander into a second: Swift's struldbrugs leer at the mating of Tristram and Isolde; Brutus and Cassius quarrel over Cleopatra An actor often plays several parts at once Issy is both Isoldes, both Swift's Esthers. She plays parts as diverse as Alice and Ophelia."

This much having been said, it should be plain that Joyce was all his life attempting to devise means of coping with the problems of inclusive consciousness that have been thrust on men by the simultaneous and instantaneous flow of information which results from electronic channels since the advent of the telegraph. Anybody who can look at Joyce and say, "It is all very confusing," has not looked at the world he lives in. Joyce is order, mastery, lucidity compared to the ordinary daily press or the university curriculum. Joyce's work is a synthesis not merely of information but of all the methods men have ever devised for coping with experience. Other poets have used a method for ordering experience. Joyce devised a method for handling all their methods simultaneously. He revealed the dimensions of the living word as the source and type of all creation. Puns are merely one of his ways of revealing the complex vitality of the most ordinary words. But for cultures unwittingly bound to writing and print the riches of ordinary speech are baffling and terrifying. A being equipped with two-dimensional perception would be confounded by an encounter with even a three-dimensional object.

The difficulty of trying to isolate names in the *Wake* is clear from the author's comment: "I am not here concerned with the language of *Finnegans Wake*, but only with the thousands of proper names that occur on the language level of the book I call these thousands of people 'tropes,' though I should very much like to be given a better word." Joyce would probably have said, "Oh, tripes," and set up a *tripos* for Miss Glasheen.

A few years ago Maritain lectured in Toronto frequently mentioning the "longing for God," but it always sounded like "lunging for God." On looking up the word "longing" in the *OED*, I discovered that it is indeed related to "lunge," that length of rope used to exercise a horse in a circle. This is an instance of the sort of awareness which Joyce had of all levels of language and discourse as a living and inter-related verbal universe.

According to William M. Shutte, "the importance of the Shakespeare theme in *Ulysses* is suggested by the first scene in the book, in which both setting and action recall the early scenes of *Hamlet*." Stephen "has associated himself not with Hamlet the son but Hamlet the father, the solitary ghost whose hair in death as in life, Horatio tells us, was 'a sable silver'd.' . . . In this context, as at the opening of 'Telemachus' Mulligan is Claudius. And Stephen is now the elder Hamlet, who paces the path above the rocks, hearing Elsinore's tempting flood."

REVIEW-ARTICLES

In a footnote Shutte adds: "The shift from Prince to King is consistent with the handling of the paternity theme throughout *Ulysses*" for Stephen in the Library episode features the heresy of Sabellius who "held that the Father was Himself His Own Son."

Once Joyce got moving along the lines of analogy in literature and life he provided more material for exegetes than anybody who ever wrote. We are still in the age of the first exegetes of Joyce, and they will "never have it so good again." The game is so tame and plentiful at this stage that every student feels like a Nimrod, and with reason.

"Stephen Dedalus, as we have seen, frequently imagines himself a successor to Shakespeare and uses Shakespeare in an attempt to define his relation to the world around him. The same cannot be said for Leopold Bloom. In 'Ithaca' Bloom distinguishes his temperament from that of his guest. Stephen's is artistic; his is scientific."

Now Bloom the advertising copy-writer is the hero of this epic. His dealings with Shakespeare are voluminous but *via* oral cliché. Joyce uses Bloom's peculiar awareness of Shakespeare as a principal means of characterizing his resourceful nature.

It is Shutte's theme, however, that it is Bloom who for Joyce corresponds to Shakespeare. While Stephen daringly draws attention to his own approximation to Shakespeare, Joyce simply trumps his arty pretension by making Bloom correspond point by point: "Similarity in temperament and outlook is emphasized by Stephen's labelling Shakespeare a 'commercial traveller,' an occupation which suits Bloom because it allows him time and scope for his dilettantising and dreams."

As Joyce's *Letters* show, he was far more industrious as a note-taker and a literary researcher than any Ph.D. student or Guggenheim Fellow of whom there is yet record. Perhaps after a century of organized team-work some adequate picture of Joyce's industry and insight may emerge. Shutte has given quite a boost to this process.

It was an excellent idea to center the efforts of a college integration program on a work of Joyce, the experiment which gave rise to *Dedalus on Crete*. Is it not strange that colleges have not long ago made the obvious discovery that artists are masters of integration? In any age they devote their entire energies to creating the most luminous analogical order for the unique experience of that age. Since no human age ever embraced such scope or diversity as our own, the artists of this time have been given superhuman tasks. And to match these tasks a race of superhuman artists has appeared. Joyce is the greatest of these. But in painting, music, architecture, and science our thrilling but unhappy age has seen the limits of human effort touched again and again.

The inspired use which a Pound or an Eliot makes of Dante provides for this time the right approach to Dante. The extensive use which Joyce made of Homer, Ovid, Chaucer, and Shakespeare provides the ideal portals through which to enter their worlds. By contrast the chronological procedure is based on evolutionary and biological metaphors which have had no relevance to twentieth-century modes of experience. This is not to be a-historical. On the contrary, we know today that nothing is more false to history than linearity.

The present small book born of an integration program is introduced by Joseph Feehan saying that the aim was "to give the entire student body an experience of joint learning. As teachers, few things have excited our envy

quite so much as the spectacle of a group of architectural students engaged in a corporate attack on a problem, each individual's solution to which became at once common property and the subject of scathing criticism from the entire group . . . What we most wanted to do was to cut across department and catalogue lines to counteract the splintering and compartmentalizing of knowledge."

Obviously Feehan is proposing a return to the oral as opposed to the written and printed traditions of learning. And to me this seems only common sense in our century, though it certainly does not imply any rejection of books.

Students and teachers alike contributed to this volume, the fine title essay on "Dedalus on Crete" being by a professor, John Frederick Nims.

The new *Joyce Review* should have no trouble in finding many excellent pieces to publish. The first issue contains Joyce's own youthful essay on Mangan, as well as the earliest sections of *F. W.* with discussion by M. J. C. Hodgart. J. Mitchell Morse in an essay on "Art and Fortitude: Joyce and the *Summa Theologica*" considers the uncompromising renunciations of Joyce's life as a writer. Northrop Frye in "Quest and Cycle in *Finnegans Wake*" traces some parallels between the work of Blake and that of Joyce. Finally Ruth von Phul in "A Note on the Donkey in *F. W.*" pursues the idea that "there are veiled suggestions that Joyce may have come to the end of a quest in *Finnegans Wake* and there found a faith, if not 'The Faith,' that he is declaring a Christian belief."

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Mauriac: Words and Critics

Lines of Life. By François Mauriac. Translated by Gerard Hopkins. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. \$3.50.

Words of Faith. By François Mauriac. Translated by Edward H. Flannery. Philosophical Library. \$2.75.

L'Art de François Mauriac. By Nelly Cormeau. Paris: Grasset.

Mauriac par lui-même. By Pierre-Henri Simon. Paris: Aux Editions du Seuil.

Mauriac et L'Art du Roman. By Joseph Majault. Paris: Robert Laffont.

TRANSLATED by Gerard Hopkins under the title of *Lines of Life, Destins* is not ranked by Mauriac's most severe critics as one of his four or five masterpieces. Yet it is one of the most moving novels, in which the typical Mauriacian atmosphere of loneliness, human weaknesses, intense and all-absorbing preoccupation with the pine trees and the vineyards is powerfully recreated. Written in 1928, after better-known works such as *Le désert de l'amour* and above all *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, it nevertheless introduces a new type, that of the aging woman attracted by a dissolute youth. Elizabeth Gornac, living alone with her father-in-law in a large estate of the Bordeaux region, surrounds Bob Lagave with attentions which she believes to be maternal, until she suddenly discovers the real nature of the secret desires which motivate her.

Gerard Hopkins, who has already translated nine novels of Mauriac including the last one to date, *The Lamb*, has succeeded in rendering faithfully and sensitively Mauriac's thought, with its subtle nuances and its undertones. Yet, as in his previous translations, he slips occasionally, particularly in idiomatic expressions or local dialectical sayings. He translates, for instance, *effeuiller*

(p. 9) by *pruning*; Mauriac would shudder to hear of his beloved vineyards being pruned at the time of harvest. This last operation takes place only in the spring, and *effeuiller* means here to remove some of the leaves so that the grapes may ripen more easily and evenly. *Sauterne*, by which Hopkins translates *Sauternais* (p. 11), means only the little town famous for its white wines, whereas in the original Mauriac designated the *region* around Sauterne. Hopkins adds gratuitously the adjectival *silk* to a scarf which was worn by the peasant, Maria Lagave, at the graduation exercises of her son. Mauriac says *foulard*, which was the best that Maria possessed, but certainly not silk. The sentence, "Père, vous êtes encore allé dans les vignes sous ce soleil," does not contain the dubitative element implied in the translation: "You haven't been down to the vines in this heat, surely, father" (p. 10).

Sometimes the dictionary has played tricks on Hopkins. When he looked up the word *écu*, he found that this coin was worth three francs and he duly translated it by "three francs." What he did not know, and what only a research not commensurate with the subject would have revealed, is that up to the last war, at least in the provinces, the appellation of *écu* was given to a silver piece worth five francs. He should also on that point have been troubled by simple mathematics. For the old man Gornac, not wanting his estate to be divided among too many heirs, was not happy when his daughter-in-law begot a second son. "My *louis* (worth then 20 francs) is worth now only ten francs," he said. When a third son was born, he sadly realized that his *louis* was worth only an "écu," obviously only half of what it was worth when the second son came along, that is, five francs. Then "le *Surveillant Général*" in a French lycée would be better translated by "prefect of discipline" rather than by the curious expression, which I believe does not exist at all in the hierarchy of American high schools, of "Vice-Principal."

There are also some more serious errors which vitiate the sense of a sentence. Maria Lagave thinks that it will be time enough for her son to leave the seminary, where his board and room and tuition are free, when "they" will think "de lui donner la tonsure." Hopkins renders that by "when they should think of making him a tonsured priest" (p. 13). He ought to know that the tonsure is given generally to first or second year students in theology, still very far from the priesthood and not at all bound by any vows. Then "député de l'arrondissement" is incompletely translated by "sitting member" (p. 13). Sitting member of what? It could be the "Conseil Général," the Senate, even the Municipal Council. Another curious omission is the name of Maria Lagave, whose portrait adorns the living-room of her son in Paris. Hopkins says only "the enlarged photograph" (p. 19) without further identification. I suppose that the exigencies of English style compelled Hopkins to translate by the past tense the frequent descriptive passages where Mauriac uses the present. Some of the directness and intensity of the original is regrettably lost in the process.

The six articles, or rather speeches, contained in *Words of Faith*, a work translated from *Paroles Catholiques*, belong to widely spread periods in Mauriac's life, and have been written, or pronounced, in different circumstances. Yet they all spring from the same Mauriacian inspiration, not only Catholic, as the French title indicates, but with the same typical Mauriac atmosphere and Mauriac inflections. None of them, although one goes back to 1929, has lost its actuality, since Mauriac knows so well how to impart a touch of the eternal, even to the most fleeting event.

"Spoken in Spain," a speech given in Madrid in 1929, presents a striking parallel between France and Spain as Mauriac sees both these countries through their respective writers, their saints, their dominant national traits. There are two images of France offered to foreigners, said Mauriac, that of Montaigne, Rabelais, Voltaire, and that of Pascal and Bossuet. What the author meant in this broad and not entirely accurate simplification, is that there is a French type molded by rationalism, denial of the supernatural, distrust for whatever is not subject of experience. Yet there is also in France a deep spiritual trend, less known to foreigners because it is obviously less blatant, hidden in the souls. French spirituality, which in that nation cannot mean but Catholicism, has survived all the attacks both intellectual and legal: the apparently cogent arguments offered by rationalists and humanists against faith, the anti-religious laws of 1902. Mauriac assails the humanists for having taught that Catholicism mutilates human nature. Catholicism, on the contrary, strengthens the human personality, as is proved by the prodigious variety of the saints it has produced. Each and every Christian is an original creation which develops according to its own propensities in the midst of the contradictions and weakness of a human nature wounded by the Fall. In passing, Mauriac confesses that he has given too much attention, in his works, to the problem of carnal love. But, while a Christian, he is also the product of his generation, that generation which has grown in the shadow of Proust, Gide, and Freud.

The second speech, "What Christians Hope for on Earth," was given in 1951 at the meeting of the Catholic Intellectuals, one of the most impressive manifestations of the vitality of Catholicism in France, about which Americans unfortunately know too little. For an entire week in November, French Catholics, sometimes joined by some prominent Catholic from abroad, gather to discuss a central topic, envisaged from the theological, philosophical, social, political, scientific, and even literary points of view. The central theme in 1951 was the contributions of Catholicism to temporal happiness. Mauriac starts with the obvious proposition that all the doctrines offered during the last century to bring happiness to humanity have failed. Christianity, of course, does not aim at terrestrial happiness, yet it has a notable contribution to offer to our earthly condition. In the last analysis, Christian hopes are to preserve on this earth the "inviolable conscience of man" against past and present dangerous ideologies. In the eyes of eighteenth and nineteenth-century philosophers, the Church represented the enslavement of the mind. Today it is "freedom incarnate." In the course of this essay, Mauriac indulges in some very personal, and controversial, considerations which are the necessary consequences of his concept of the strictly spiritual mission of the Church. He holds that the condition of Christianity is worse when Christians hold political power. The normal condition of the Church, for him, is one of subjection, and even of abjection, eminently favorable to the fulfillment of her spiritual teaching. Christian hopes, therefore, do not lie in a political order; yet Christians must not renounce politics for they would thus evade a clear duty. The last talk, "The Living God," was also given under the auspices of the Catholic Intellectuals, in 1953. Mauriac avers that he is neither a theologian nor a philosopher, and that his approach to God is strictly subjective and not necessarily valid for all. His God, like Pascal's, is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, not the God of the scholars or of the philosophers. He reaches God intuitively without rational process, through Christ, the Holy Eucharist. God is not a metaphysical entity, but the Father.

The speech "Is Christian Civilization in Peril?" expresses some of Mauriac's familiar ideas on the different meanings of that term. Civilization for him is not material progress, and he rejects on that score what he thinks falsely to be the American brand of civilization. In spite of the enormous amount of material help given to Europe by the United States and for which Mauriac professes to be grateful, he affirms that civilization is still European, and rests on European values. This civilization is indeed in peril since Russian hordes are posed in Germany, yet the crisis of civilization is essentially a spiritual crisis for which Christians themselves are partly to blame in their tragic failure to adapt themselves to the needs of the modern world. But Mauriac ends this pessimistic speech on a note of hope. He believes that human free will must remain one of the essential ingredients of history and above all he believes in divine grace. "An Author and his Work," a speech given at Stockholm in 1952, when Mauriac received the Nobel Prize, deals more especially with literary theories and the author's views of humanity. His world appears black, indeed, but a light shines upon it. His characters are often debased and criminal, but they know that they have a soul. This fictional world expresses, often in an exaggerated form, some of Mauriac's personal problems. But, as his characters reveal the secret of his torments, so does the Cross reveal the secret of his own peace. This glowing homage to Catholicism rendered in such a solemn circumstance, in the Academy of a Protestant nation, is particularly moving. "Anguish," a speech delivered in Geneva, in the City of Calvin, in 1953, is another important revelation of Mauriac's psychology. He treats anguish again not from a theological or philosophical point of view, but from his own experience, and this experience throws an important light on his literary creation. He has known anguish as a child, in the adult age, now in old age, the anguish of all men who cannot forget that they are condemned to death. There is also, to be sure, a Christian form of anguish which Jansenism has exploited by its terrible theory on predestination. Yet there is only one happiness, a Christian happiness, and the gift of God is peace.

Mauriac has had, as everybody knows, a host of enthusiastic admirers and not a few detractors, particularly among Catholics. Among the former, certainly none has been more prone to praise him, more dithyrambic, than Nelly Cormeau. Mauriac himself cannot hide a certain embarrassment in the preface which he, nevertheless, and without fear of ridicule, devotes to her study of his life and his works. To dismiss immediately the negative part of this review, just here lies the weakness of this study: the evident worship of Mauriac throughout the work, the constant paens of praise for the man, his psychology, his characters, his art, revealing a total absence of critical appraisal, a refusal to acknowledge any deficiency, a monotonous disposition to admire everything and justify everything. Such a complete lack of judicial attitude, which is almost constantly irritating, becomes downright absurd in the closing sentence of the book when, speaking of Mauriac's qualities, she exclaims that after we have examined them, "it behooves us only to adore them in silence and fervor."

Normally the question of the religion professed by a critic would have little bearing on the quality of his study and it would be bad taste even to mention it. But since the fact that Nelly Cormeau is an agnostic is divulged by Mauriac himself in his preface, and since, besides, at many points in her work she places herself quite openly outside the fold of the believers, this point becomes a legitimate subject for discussion. Mauriac dismisses the problem rather lightly on

RENASCENCE

the theory, I suppose, that many good Catholics have not loved and understood him as well as Miss Cormeau. Yet her inability to follow him intellectually and sentimentally to the end of the road along which he leads or attempts to lead his characters is at times painfully obvious. It is evident that an important part of Mauriac's world must remain closed to one who will not view it in the light of Christianity. To give but one example of this lack of comprehension, Miss Cormeau often confuses the exaggerated severity of Jansenism in the matter of wordly pleasures with the more moderate, sane, and orthodox position of Catholicism. It is not a true expression of Catholic ethics to say, as she does interpreting Mauriac's temptations: "Toutes délices sont pour lui criminelles" (p. 66), solely, presumably, because he is a Catholic.

Yet in spite of these deficiencies, Nelly Cormeau's book is easily the best informed and the most complete which has been written on Mauriac up to the present day. She has examined the work and the man under all their aspects. She has given the most thorough analysis of his characters and the most subtle appreciation of his style. She has skillfully woven into a creditable and agreeable narrative the confidences given by Mauriac on his childhood, the descriptions of his native surroundings. Although she does not seem to have had access to new information on the subject, she uses admirably all that is available. She rightly defines Mauriac's genre as the tragic novel, but a tragic form in which external events play little part, for it rests almost exclusively on psychological developments. Mauriac's characters lead apparently normal lives, yet they are all victims of an irreducible internal conflict, infinitely more dramatic than any external obstacle interfering with the realization of their desires. Mauriac sees them *ab intus*, from the inside, as it were and this is the secret of the depth of his vision, and of its lucidity. It is that particular technique which drew the bitter attack of Jean-Paul Sartre against Mauriac in the celebrated article of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* of 1939. Sartre accuses Mauriac of playing God in directing the destinies of his characters. Miss Cormeau devotes a long chapter to this quarrel and she convincingly refutes Sartre's charges which are really founded on a false conception of the attitude of the novelist before his work and his characters. One feature commends this book particularly to the attention of scholars and research workers: it contains what was at the time of its writing certainly the most complete bibliography of Mauriac's works, including articles and prefaces, and of the critical writings about him in France. Some foreign items are included also, but in a rather lackadaisical fashion, the English and American bibliography being notably weak and lacking in important entries.

It would obviously be an injustice to consider Pierre-Henri Simon's book as a pocket edition of Nelly Cormeau's. Yet, probably because they use common sources, many of Simon's comments not only on the biography but also on the structure of the works, on the characters, even on the style, bear a striking similarity to hers. The formula of this remarkable collection of the "Ecrivains d'aujourd'hui" does not allow lengthy developments. But within these limitations, Simon manages to say, and to say very well, the essential. He situates Mauriac very precisely in relation to his time. He relates his works to the specific geographical locale, always a place well known and dear to Mauriac, one of the domains where he spent his childhood. Simon writes with a spontaneity and a directness too frequently lacking in critical works. His documentation is scrupulously exact and one finds here and there quite a number of original positions and appreciations. There are important comments on the eternal prob-

lem of the Catholic novelist, a problem which Mauriac has solved, as Simon states, not by a thesis as Bourget did, not by writing edifying literature, but by the introduction of a Catholic atmosphere in a world of sinners. This little book is profusely illustrated with pictures of Mauriac at various stages of his life, of his family, his friends, the various estates of his childhood in which he still spends his summers. Mauriac does not appear as a remote, almost mythical character, but as a living person, in an authentic surrounding. But perhaps the most original aspect of this book is the introduction in the margin or on the opposite page of comments by Mauriac himself on some parts of Simon's criticism, either to confirm it or to deny it, or to bring some needed precision. Several reproductions of autographs throw a precious light on Mauriac's procedure of composition. They show him not as the facile author which an erroneous legend has presented, but as a painstaking, slow worker, erasing, correcting, adding in a nervous handwriting. The texts from Mauriac's works, which constitute about half of this volume, all tend to justify the title by illustrating some phase of his life, his personality, his feelings, his tendencies. They are supposed to complete in Mauriac's own words the picture presented by Simon. They are therefore drawn either from autobiographical works, such as *Commencements d'une vie* and the several volumes of his *Journal*, or from obviously autobiographical novels, particularly those of his youth.

Majault's study belongs to quite a different category. It is an extremely sensitive, sometimes intuitive essay, subjective, therefore without the organization and the method of Cormeau or of Simon. There is also a more pronounced critical attitude. Majault, of course, admires Mauriac, admires him knowingly. He praises his delineation of characters, the dramatic intensity of his tale, the density and the poetic value of his style, the unique analysis and description of psychological states, the vigor of the images. But he dares also to criticize. Mauriac shows a certain lack of imagination in the creation of his themes and of his characters. His denouements are often weak, forcing upon his characters a conversion which is not sufficiently prepared by psychological motivation. We know what Mauriac would answer to these objections: conversions are always the work of divine grace and divine grace is always, at the end, unexplainable. It reaches the soul by the most improbable channels. Granting that Mauriac is on a sound theological ground, it remains that, from the point of view of literature, the introduction of divine grace as a *deus ex machina* solves his problem too easily. Majault notes also the too frequent repetitions of the same descriptions, of the same remarks, throughout Mauriac's works, even some occasional negligences in the style, usually so perfect, of the author.

It is almost impossible to treat Mauriac without commenting on the particular problems he has encountered as a Catholic writer quite conscious of his responsibility. Majault gives a great deal of thoughtful attention to this question. Mauriac realizes that his works may bring harm to a soul, but the most innocent books may have the same effect. The novelist, and especially the Catholic novelist, has a primary responsibility to paint the truth. In that function he enjoys a privileged position, since he alone knows the whole truth, that is the whole interplay of spiritual and material forces under the superficial appearances of created things. One could, I think, detect some sophistry in this argumentation which is only technically correct. The novelist is not beholden to the truth in the manner of the theologian, the philosopher, and even of the scientist. The novel is made of observation and of creation, and not all the elements

RENASCENCE

drawn from observation are indiscriminately used. Literary taste, judgment, logic dictate their choice. The question will be then: Will the Catholic novelist paint evil as it exists, because evil also is true? No sane Catholic would, I think, impose that obligation upon the writer of his own faith. Another argument in favor of Mauriac appears much more valid. Both Maritain and Du Bos allow a Catholic novelist to depict evil provided he shows no connivance with it. A novelist, says Majault, cannot consider evil *in abstracto*, but in the concrete, in his character. But his art consists precisely in the faculty imparted to him to identify himself with his characters. This is certainly true of Mauriac, so that he cannot divorce himself even from the most sinful of them. Thus, in a measure at least, he is in connivance with them but it remains for him to hate sin even in the most beloved of his sinners. Majault, too, feels the need to take part in the Mauriac-Sartre controversy, and his position, if less passionate than that of Nelly Cormeau, is far more cogent and convincing. Sartre criticizes Mauriac for utilizing a concept of the novel which is strictly his own, from a technique which is strictly personal, valid only for himself and which it would be impossible and absurd to try to extend to the entire art of the novel, precisely the most free of constraint of all the genres. Majault never strays too far from the texts and his work is replete with lengthy quotations from Mauriac. Yet they are so happily chosen that they do not break at all the smooth development of his thought or the liveliness of his style. Without critical apparatus, this book remains nevertheless, although on a restricted basis, one of the most penetrating studies of Mauriac.

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FERNAND VIAL

Book Reviews

Picture of Precocity

Maurras jusqu'à l'Action Française. By Léon S. Roudiez. Paris: André Bonne.

PASSIONATE polemicist, acrimonious editorialist, violent anti-democrat, Charles Maurras was never wanting in enemies during the half-century that he busied himself with fanning the flames of French nationalism. On the other hand, he was quite naturally the darling of the nation's no less rabid if less numerous reactionaries, and was all but made the object of a cult by the neo-royalists whose standard he tirelessly upheld. Is it to be wondered at, then, that Maurras criticism, of which there has been no dearth, has not been distinguished by its objectivity? With this in mind, the author of the present study determined not to be caught up in the swirls of emotion and controversy that have engulfed numerous other Maurras interpreters. In his attempt to trace the genesis of the philosophic, religious, and aesthetic concepts of his subject, whom he had once described as "the intellectual father of fascism, nazism, and other non-communist forms of modern totalitarianism" (*Charles Maurras: The Formative Years*, 1950, p. 2), Roudiez has, accordingly, in the main restricted himself to the role of analyst and annotator of Maurras' early articles and of the recollective pages of his more recent works. And it goes without saying that the danger of his being swayed by partisan feeling has been considerably diminished by his electing to make 1899 the terminal date of his investigation.

This by no means signifies that Roudiez has assigned himself an easy task or that he has allowed himself little ground to cover. He must become involved with the psychological impact of precocity on a lad who had read the Bible at eight; who in his early teens was grappling with the likes of Mistral, Musset, Pascal, Homer, Lucretius, and Virgil, not to mention some Shakespeare in the English original; who at seventeen was given the responsibility of reviewing treatises on philosophy for a learned journal. Moreover, this precocity was accompanied by extreme sensitivity, introversion, intellectual rebelliousness, and receptivity to bookish, as contrasted with human, influence. Surely there is decided challenge in venturing, as Roudiez does, to establish the links between these personality traits, the shattering emotional crisis brought on by the almost total deafness Maurras incurred at the age of fourteen, and the abandonment of his quest for metaphysical certitude at twenty. There is, too, a vast body of written matter to be digested from the pen of the Maurras of pre-*Action Française* days: critic, essayist, poet, writer of short stories, and co-founder of literary schools, a factor which, nonetheless, would seem less daunting than that of his never having succeeded, then or in later years, in tearing himself away from journalistic obligations long enough to essay systematically piecing together the scattered elements of his doctrine.

Roudiez' book is something more than a translation of his doctoral thesis, the aforementioned *Charles Maurras: The Formative Years*. The cumbrous scholarly machinery of the latter and nearly two-thirds of its 723 footnotes have been done away with. Nor does the forty-seven-page bibliography of the earlier work reappear, the author deeming it superfluous in light of the publication in 1953 and 1954 of a general bibliography on Maurras by Roger Joseph and

Jean Forges. Stylistically the difference is chiefly manifest in greater verbal surgery. More important, in the interest of critical integrity Roudiez had Maurras read his thesis in 1950, and maintained epistolary commerce with him until his death in 1952, this having resulted in the providing of needed clarification and corroboration, in the reduction of personal speculation. And not blind to the dangers of always taking an author at his word, he visited the places most closely associated with Maurras' youth, sought and received inside information from his nephew and niece, from his friends, enemies, and acquaintances.

His book is clear, concise, discriminating, erudite. Amongst not a few other things, he prudently weighs the influence of the *abbé* Penon and of Frédéric Amouretti, perhaps the only two individuals with whom Maurras came in contact during the period in question who affected him profoundly, and comments shrewdly on that of the numerous writers devoured by the young Maurras, though disclaiming all intent to do so more than partially and superficially. He is able to see through to some of the confused interpretations and erroneous estimates of Albert Thibaudet, the most distinguished of his predecessors, properly taking issue with Thibaudet's apparent belief that Maurras was "in a single stroke transported from integral anarchy to integral monarchy." Knowing his man well, Roudiez underscores Maurras' knack for adjusting facts to fit his thesis, and the occasional differences between what he preached and what he practiced, all the while refraining from passing moral judgment on him. Unafraid to state positive opinions, he, for example, places the poetry of the young Maurras on a higher plane than that of Vielé-Griffin, Merrill, Moréas, and Régnier. But he is at his best in marking out the surprisingly large number of halts, twists, and turns in the path Maurras followed to classicism, traditionalism, and monarchism, for he never fully succeeded in stifling the romantic in him, nor was his divorce from political liberalism effected overnight.

In sum, within its carefully defined limits, *Maurras jusqu'à l'Action Française* may be accounted a very fine study, one to which Maurras scholars may turn with confidence, read with pleasure and reward.

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CHESTER W. OBUCHOWSKI

Newman Himself

Autobiographical Writings. By John Henry Newman. Edited with introductions by Henry Tristram. Sheed and Ward. \$4.50.

Faith and Prejudice and Other Unpublished Sermons of Cardinal Newman. Edited by the Birmingham Oratory. Sheed and Ward. \$2.50.

THE first of these two volumes contains the autobiographical documents, apart from the *Apologia*, which Cardinal Newman left behind him in his room at the Birmingham Oratory: ten in all, ranging in length from less than one page to more than seventy. They are as follows:

- 1) An "autobiography in miniature," a rather poignant commemoration of the chief epochs in his life made by Newman at intervals between 1812 and 1884 on the back cover of an ordinary school exercise book.
- 2-3) Two brief autobiographical sketches prepared by Newman for reference works and completed in a supplement by the present editor. They are of

BOOK REVIEWS

no real importance, though perhaps useful to a specialist as supplying the names of certain of Newman's contemporaries.

- 4) The original version, based on Newman's MS, of the autobiographical memoir first published in 1891 from Fr. William Neville's transcript by Anne Mozley in her edition of the *Letters and Correspondence*. Written very simply in the third person, this supplements the account in the *Apologia* of the years till 1832 and was intended as a guide to Miss Mozley or any other editor or biographer as to how the documents Newman had left behind might be used to compose a trustworthy picture of his mind. The present version is somewhat fuller than Miss Mozley's, being less reticent about such topics as the hard drinking done at Trinity (though not by him) when Newman was a freshman. It is especially valuable for an appendix to Chapter IV which supplies three passages Newman excised from his MS as being too severe on Hawkins in recounting the quarrel over the tutorship. These are indispensable for an understanding of that complex affair and throw much light on Newman's own character as well as on that of the Provost of Oriel.
- 5) "My Illness in Sicily," a slightly longer and decidedly more clinical version of the account first published in the Mozley Letters of what Newman came to view as his third crucial illness, a divine visitation for his presumptive and willful behavior at Oxford and in Italy.
- 6-8) Three very intimate and primarily spiritual journals which Newman began to keep, in the approved fashion, as a zealous young Evangelical: the first, of private memoranda covering the years 1804 to 1826; the second, of extracts from his private journal of 1821 to 1828; and the third, a record of spiritual exercises for lenten seasons and periods of retreat from 1838 to 1847.
- 9) A journal of the years from 1859 to 1879, a good deal of which will be familiar to readers of Wilfrid Ward's biography. Toward the end of it Newman wrote: "I am dissatisfied with the whole of this book. It is more or less a complaint from one end to the other. But it represents what has been the real state of my mind, and what my Cross has been."
- 10) And finally Newman's 1870-73 "Memorandum about My Connection with the Catholic University," also familiar to readers of Ward and of Fergal McGrath.

The sad thing about this volume of autobiographical writings is that it represents the last work of its beloved editor, the late Fr. Henry Tristram, for so many years curator of the great collection at Birmingham and self-effacing guide of students of Newman from all over the world. So far as the present writer can tell from his own transcriptions, possibly faulty, of some of the material, the text presented is a sound one, marred by only a few slips and omissions. One has to read only the introductions to the autobiographical memoir and the three early journals to realize anew that Fr. Tristram was a first-class scholar who could write admirable and richly informative prose. That his critical sense, furthermore, was sophisticated and reliable is evident from his refusal to accept Maisie Ward's dismissal of the early journals as spiritual revelation, as well as from his decision to publish all of these documents in full. It was Fr. Tristram's regrettable and yet wonderful habit to write good things about

RENASCENCE

Newman, put them away in some corner of his bulging room, and forget all about them unless they could be of aid to some visiting scholar; and so there is reason to hope that more of his earlier work will now turn up. Meanwhile, so far as one can tell from certain things in this volume and from the introduction to the new collection of sermons, the Oratory has made no mistake in entrusting the care of the Newman collection to Fr. C. Stephen Dessain.

Autobiographical Writings is not, on the whole, a book for the uninformed, despite Fr. Tristram's belief that it might encourage the general reader to pursue further the reading of Newman. Read as a group by the non-specialist, these selections might possibly have the effect they sometimes had for Newman himself: "How unpleasant it is to read former memoranda," he wrote in 1870, "I can't quite tell why. They read affected, unreal, egotistical, petty, fussy." Some of them are elaborate pieces of self-justification (convincing, to be sure) by a man painfully conscious of having been ill-used by those in authority, who were in almost every other way his inferiors. A few of them reveal weaknesses human enough, one must admit, but which can be seen in perspective only with the correction which nothing but a fairly close acquaintance with Newman's life and work can afford.

For those readers who are well acquainted with Newman, the highlight of this important volume will probably be the first complete publication in English (some of these documents have already been published in French) of the three early and profoundly revealing journals. Readers of Maisie Ward, Sean O'Faolain, Père Bouyer, and others will know something about them already, but in the writer's opinion their full significance has yet to be realized, particularly that of the third journal. Pride and sensuality, Newman has told us elsewhere, are the temptations peculiar to the academic world; and it is clearer than ever now that he was speaking from his own experience. As to the latter, it will come as a surprise to many that he had fierce temptations in his youth; and these, in turn, were succeeded by a much subtler and more refined type of sensuality: "I do not like a rule of life, although for eighteen years I have wished to live a more or less regular life. I like tranquility, security, a life among friends, and among books, untroubled by business cares—the life of an Epicurean in fact. This state of mind, never strange to me, has grown with the years" (p. 246). Holiness rather than peace had for so many years been his guiding principle, however, that he was never in any prolonged danger of substituting the life of a gentleman for the struggle toward sanctity.

Pride was a thornier problem. Sometimes it seems to the outsider only an endearingly human vanity, as in the entry for August 6, 1843: "afternoon service at St. Mary's—preached. Perhaps some people will be sorry that they never heard me, when I shall have given up St. Mary's." But often to him it proved so devilish and so obsessive as to make his whole life seem a mockery: "The thoughts that struck me most were," he wrote in 1843,

that God put it into my heart, when 5 or six years old, to ask *what* and *why* I was, yet now I am forty-two, and have never answered it in *my conduct* . . . that I have acted hardly ever for God's glory, that my motive in all my exertions during the last 10 years has been the pleasure of energizing intellectually, as if my talents were given me to play a game with, (and hence I care as little about the event as one does about a game); that it is fearful to think how little I have used my gifts in

BOOK REVIEWS

God's service; that I have used them for myself. Hence that selflove in one shape or another, e.g., vanity, desire of the good opinion of friends, &c. have been my motive; and that possibly it is *the* sovereign sin in my heart. . . . (p. 223)

It was the humility above all of Keble and Pusey that drew Newman so powerfully to them, for he knew that though it might be the hardest of virtues for him to acquire, yet it was also "the very condition" as he put it, "of being a Christian." In the light of these journals, Newman's treatment at the hands of his myopic superiors, deplorable as it seems, takes on the aspect of an extraordinary test of his virtue, a special providence more dramatic in its implications than almost any of those he delighted to chronicle and dwell on.

One can only regret that over the years, in his periodic re-arrangements of his papers, Newman cut from his memoranda many passages that he apparently did not care to entrust to the discretion of any biographer, no matter how well disposed. From what he has told us there can be little doubt, however, that even for him the advancing years meant, not the unearthly serenity of the Richmond portrait, but in part at least, "the fight to recover what has been lost and found and lost again and again; and now, under conditions that seem unpropitious." Yet the unsparing frankness with which he revealed his failings in early and middle age, the patience with which he bore his troubles as a Catholic, and the magnanimity he later showed to his opponents ("Let bygones be bygones," he would say in his final years to his would-be champions)—these things are enough, if we had nothing else, to suggest that one of the greatest, if least heralded, of Newman's triumphs was the victory of a hard-won humility over the pride and the guile of the gentleman and the noetic. It is a paradigm for intellectuals.

Though there are ten volumes of his Anglican sermons, *Faith and Prejudice* is only the third volume we have of Newman's Catholic efforts in a field in which he still has no peer in the modern English-speaking world. And in this attractively printed little book, which exhausts the unpublished autograph sermons since 1845, there are only nine pieces altogether, seven of them preached at St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, in 1848, one at the church of the Birmingham Oratory in 1870, and the last at the opening of Bishop Ullathorne's new seminary in 1873. It should be said at once that they are well worth publishing, and it is probably unnecessary to say that they are a good deal better than almost anything commonly available to the English-speaking parishioner of 1958.

At the same time, they are less impressive than the sermons we have known, perhaps because most of them were preached, not to the cultivated, but to the relatively simple congregations of a mushrooming industrial city. The trouble is not that the sentences and the sermons themselves are shorter and even simpler than usual, having been preached without book in deference to the Catholic custom. Nor is it, happily, that Newman talked to his hearers about "patience, resignation, and industry," which he once described as appropriate topics when one is addressing the poor. No, his method here is the same as usual: a definite topic, such as the necessity for mortification or the treatment of Our Lady in Scripture, suggested by the Gospel of the day and developed without pretense in fresh, vivid detail, with the aid of wonderfully apposite quotations and analogies possible only to a poet who had his Bible by heart.

If these sermons are less resonant and moving than usual, it is because they seem less personal than their predecessors, because they lack that astonishing psychological insight which in the older sermons flashes out suddenly in passages so acute they take one's breath away. "As then, the Christian preacher aims at the Divine Glory, not in any vague and general way," wrote Newman in his essay on university preaching, "but definitely by the enunciation of some article or passage of the Revealed Word, so further, he enunciates it, not for the instruction of the whole world, but directly for the sake of those very persons who are before him." How much, one wonders, could Newman have known in 1848 about the congregation of St. Chad's? Few will say of these sermons, as many said of those at Oxford, "I felt as if the preacher were talking directly to me." When his hearers were students or cultivated adults, Newman chose the same kinds of topics but conceived his ideas more rigorously, chose his words more carefully, and drew more deeply (though always more unobtrusively) on his wide humanistic learning. And of course he had so much in common with such auditors that he could safely follow the maxim, "Look into thy heart and write." In *Faith and Prejudice* he is earnest and sincere, but he is usually also at one remove from his congregation: *con non cordi loquitur*, or at least not quite.

The editors have apparently named the new volume after the best wrought of the sermons it contains, "Prejudice and Faith," though for some reason the order of the words has been changed on the title page. Here Newman develops a striking analogy between the Jews who failed to recognize Christ despite the evidence of Scripture and the Christians who do not admit the place of the Church, even though the Bible often alludes to it; he then illuminates the source of their difficulty, its relevance for believers, and the best way of meeting it. In "The Infidelity of the Future," the last and most thoughtful sermon of the collection, he tells seminarians how to cope with a world of which "Christianity has never yet had experience . . . a world simply irreligious." It is a most prophetic work, more timely in England and America now than when it was delivered. And the method is what we should expect from Newman: by the power of holiness and by a sound knowledge of Catholic theology.

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MARTIN J. SVAGLIC

Down to Earth

The Mystery of the Holy Innocents and Other Poems. By Charles Péguy. Translated by Pansy Pakenham. Introduction by Alexander Dru. Harper. \$3.00.

Péguy, his Prose and Poetry. By Alexander Dru. Harper. \$2.50.

BOOTH books are aimed at the English speaking world, in order to correct a situation where, Alexander Dru writes, Péguy's fame, unlike Claudel's, is curiously in the air as though his poetry were a secondary consideration. They will very likely fulfill their purpose to a great extent.

The preface to the anthology simply summarizes the contents of the study. Pansy Pakenham's translation is, in this reviewer's opinion, a good one; it renders Péguy's rhythm quite well, and his occasional familiarity or mischievous-

BOOK REVIEWS

ness. However the French image is dropped here and there unnecessarily. For instance, Péguy says to the Holy Virgin, presenting the wheat fields of the Beauce (p. 22): "Voici votre regard sur cette immense chape"; which is translated: "Here you may overlook an everspreading sheet." Could not the English speaking reader visualize the *cope*, usually golden, narrowing at the top, and widening at the bottom? Péguy praying for those fallen in battle also wrote (p. 61): "Qu'ils ne soient pas pesés comme on pèse un démon." It is rendered: "May they never be weighed in a spiritual scale." The weighing suggests the scale in any case. Why not keep the *evil spirit*? The reading of a very few pages of Péguy quickly tell that his view, in contrast to Bloy's and Bernanos', was that sin came from the weight of the earth and flesh rather than from the spirit.

The flap of the anthology presents Dru as an English scholar, translator of Kierkegaard and Burckhardt, and whose *Péguy* is his first book. It is not surprising then that the study places Péguy in relation to English poetry—Coleridge and Wordsworth—and occasionally to Kierkegaard but not to the French Catholic literary writing of Péguy's generation. It is to be hoped that the author will correct this oversight in some subsequent book.

The liminary sentence in italics is a quotation of Valéry on Mallarmé, transposed from Pascal: "Tu ne me lirais pas si tu ne m'avais déjà compris." That is, the English speaking public would not read Péguy if it had not already understood him. "The Approach to Péguy," as the title of that first chapter reads, would call for something more existential, something more in harmony with the subject matter. The Mohammedans are said to value the ink of scholars higher than the blood of martyrs, in contrast to Christendom. The agony of the white page of paper calls to mind Flaubert, Mallarmé, Valéry; but Péguy belongs to Christendom.

Are the mistakes in the French used in the italics an insignificant detail? Page 113 should read: *Du nouveau réel*, and not "réelle." There should be no definite article at *machine arrière*, which is adverbial; none either before *Politique d'abord* (p. 31). The definite article narrows the comprehension of the French noun as Gustave Guillaume penetratingly showed.

The center of the book is, in my opinion, the reference to Coleridge's poetic theory, i.e. the distinction between *imagination* and *fancy*. Péguy kept a happy equilibrium between the two, equidistant from intuitionists and intellectualists. Coleridge's theory, always according to Dru, explains Péguy better than it does Wordsworth. But Dru is carried by his enthusiasm when he states (p. 54): "Péguy's conception of poetry falls more easily into place in the English poetic tradition, and fell on barren soil in his own country." What is the logic of that? How could the barren soil receive him best? Not so, "imagination-fancy" resembles very much the couple, *anima-animus*, of which Péguy's contemporary Claudel, among other Frenchmen, spoke. We are informed (p. 55) that Coleridge passed from "the notion of poetic creation" to the theory mentioned above as he was converted from Unitarianism to the belief in the Trinity. Why did not the author exercise at that point his *fancy-animus* to explain somewhat those interrelationships? Some "explication de texte," however brief, would also have been useful to show how Coleridge's theory applies to Péguy.

Another criticism is in order: the French rightist tradition is minimized in the book; but here the reviewer feels shy since the French themselves do not yet

grant justice to Péguy's contemporaries who were monarchists. Why, e.g., is Léon Daudet regularly omitted in the list of converts: Léon Bloy, Péguy, Claudel who, naturally, abounded in charity, but did not exude meekness? Did Daudet alone, who, incidentally, was a convert going to church, lack charity? Hence the reader is led to believe, as usual, that the right, Catholic or not, defended dead issues. Hence Dru shows well the wrongs of the rightists: Dreyfus, a Jew, had been accused because of being a Jew. But the aloofness which Péguy came to display toward the socialists appears to have a vague, abstract cause. It would help if we learned that Péguy as well as his friend the unconverted Jew, Bernard Lazare, protested vehemently in 1904, and the former broke with his socialist friends when the latter, coming to power, and those whom by a confusion which still plagues us in the democracies we still call "liberal" Catholics and "liberal" Protestants, brought about the practical economic monopoly of state education, a totalitarian measure if there is one.

Dru deserves unstinted praise when he points out that Romain Rolland, a free mind, one admired abroad for his universalism, did not however understand Péguy's universalism through the concrete.

Theology, *regina scientiarum!* It occasionally helps in literature, by transposition. Fr. Pinard de La Boullaye wondered why the suffixes, *graphy*, *logy*, *sophy*, used in science could not be affixed to the root *ieros* since the root *theo* is already used. Graphy for the facts; logy, for the retracing of ideas and currents; sophy for doctrine proper (or creative writing in literature). We have to do here with *hierography*, except for the fundamental intuition. Dru is urbane; he chooses among his facts in order to give his reader not all, but their flower: e.g. the two pages of the history of *L'Action Française*. For the hierology of Péguy's time let us open Adrien Dansette's *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine* and also Henri Massis' *Maurras et notre temps*. All in all, this study is a success.

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JEAN DAVID

A New Manner

The Strange Islands. By Thomas Merton. New Directions. \$3.00.

A REMARK of T. S. Eliot's concerning a *desideratum* which at one time he set for himself in the perfecting of his poetry, and which he certainly attained in *The Four Quartets*, namely, "a poetry which should be essential poetry, with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones . . . so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that in reading it we are intent on what the poem points at and not on the poetry," relates itself with singular pertinence to Thomas Merton's new collection of poems (his fifth), *The Strange Islands*. For here within a stark, spare utterance is a poetic substance held by the poet at its ontological roots, and which he projects directly, as it were, with no intervening media of text. For, completely free of any technical artifice or self-conscious structuring, the poetic content comes through straight as an arrow loosed from the bow.

In his brief preface Merton informs us that the twenty-one poems in this collection were spread over a period of seven or eight years, though most of them actually belong to 1955 and 1956. The volume also contains Merton's

BOOK REVIEWS

allegorical verse drama, *The Tower of Babel*, first published in *Jubilee* and shortly after its publication dramatized with great effectiveness over a New York television network. The book is dedicated to Mark and Dorothy Van Doren, the former one of Merton's teachers at Columbia University, and a dear friend.

The book has a pleasing arrangement, yet its three divisions have nothing to do with chronological sequence. The nine poems in Part I include the two longest poems in the collection: "Sports Without Blood—a Letter to Dylan Thomas," written too late for inclusion in Merton's *Tears of the Blind Lions* (1951), but printed in the *Selected Poems* (London, 1952) edited by Robert Speaight, and "Elias—Variations on a Theme," one of the three poems written for the nuns of the New York Carmel, in response to a "billet" which each Carmelite draws by lot at the beginning of Advent, and which states the subject for a Christmas song which she must personally compose and sing at the crib on Christmas night. Since, as Merton once remarked, "the Carmelites have adopted me," some resourceful nun drew a billet for Merton and sent it on to him. He responded with the long poem "Elias," which, as he states in his preface, "hardly turned out to be a carol or even a Christmas poem. It simply represents what the author had going through his head in the Christmas season of 1954." Two shorter poems, "The Annunciation" and "Stranger," which appear in Part III, were written for like occasions.

Part II of the collection is Merton's Morality Play, *The Tower of Babel*, covering some thirty-four pages (in a book of 102), and having some 800 lines. Part III is a grouping of twelve additional poems, the longest and second last of which is the "Elegy for the Monastery Barn," written in August of 1953, after the cowbarn at Gethsemani had burned to the ground during the monks' evening meditation, which they left "to fight a very hot fire, and the poem arrived about the same time as the fire truck from the nearest town." As to chronology, the more recent poems are scattered about in Parts I and III; Merton names "Anatomy of Melancholy," "Exploits of a Machine Age," which he dedicates to his friend Robert Lax, "Sincerity," "Birdcage Walk," "Nocturne," "Landscape," and the "Severe Nun," as among the latest.

A mere first and leisurely reading of the twenty-one poems of this collection—a number of which are familiar to certain readers because of their previous publication in *The Commonwealth*, *New World Writing*, *Sign*, and *Thought*, point up at once evidences of a new manner, as one delightedly discovers that the "bare bones" of the most simple statement have suddenly become transparencies for transfiguring and essential poetry. The clean fibres of word and symbol are not only the carriers of a valid poetic experience, but seem to exist in their own right, as each human and finite significance finds its place in the pattern and reference of its eternal and objective meaning. Curiously, only about five of the poems are set in a direct introspectional climate and are written in the first person. Yet these too carry a compelling note of universality, and that at several interpretative levels. As examples one might cite the poem "Whether There is Enjoyment in Bitterness," wherein the poet pleads to be let alone to "savor" some scathing and terrifying inner experience as "life and death are killing one another in my flesh." Yet at the close he begs:

Only (whoever you may be)
Pray for my soul. Speak my name
To Him, for in my bitterness

RENASCENCE

I can hardly speak to Him: and He
While He is busy killing me
Refuses to listen.

"Birdcage Walk" is another of these poems, based on the reminiscence of childhood walks in a London park, "when I was young and easily surprised"; the child's observations probe the spirit as they carry insights startling and profound. Also included in this group are "Early Mass," a remarkable poem on the Eucharist and mystical oneness in Christ, Who "has cleanly built His sacred town." "A Prelude: For the Feast of St. Agnes," first published in *The Sign of Jonas*, also belongs in this category, and "To a Severe Nun," which will no doubt occasion some interesting comment, and that especially if the subtlety of its satire be missed. For one who has chosen "a path too steep for others to follow," the poet comments, "I take it you prefer to go without them." There is an expert probing of her inner motives, followed by pointed cautions, albeit charitably given:

Do not be humbled if, for an instant,
Christ seems glad to suffer in another.

Forget this scandal. Do not look at them
Or you may lose your nerve, and come to admit
That violence is your evasion and that you,
You most of all, are weak.

Poems of familiar and contemporary pertinence such as "The Guns of Fort Knox" (just a few miles from Gethsemani abbey), "Exploits of a Machine Age," and "How to Enter a Big City," are interspersed with poems of so complete a spiritual texture as the paradoxical "Wisdom," shortest poem in the book, and "When in the soul of the serene disciple," the gripping utterance of a complete denudation of the human spirit—"It is a small thing to say the roof is gone:/He has not even a house."

Throughout the twenty-one poems in this new volume, which represent Merton's latest work, his symbolism and imagery are solidly and splendidly structural, escaping the ordinary categories in the specific and unique meaning the poet has assigned them in the particular context. Merton seems to have created new symbols, and the timeless ones have been charged with a living fire. These are poems to be read meditatively.

The verse-drama, *The Tower of Babel*, in two parts, four scenes, which comprises the second division of the book, introduced by two theme-texts, the one from St. Augustine's *City of God* xiv, 28, and the other from St. John's *Apocalypse* 18:21, 23-24, is a brilliant performance. Most important, perhaps, in the *dramatis personae* are the two personages Raphael and Thomas, who stand as it were on the side-lines watching the unfolding of the action, and whose apposite remarks and reflective comment provide a necessary explication of theme. Thomas (the name is symbolic), unperceptive, and easily taken in by appearances, questions each step of the play's progress, while Raphael (again a symbolic name), explains and interprets. In Part One, Scene One: "The Legend of the Tower," besides the two characters mentioned, are the first and second builders, their captain, their leader, and a chorus, whose function throughout the play is equivalent to that of the chorus in the Greek dramas. In this scene

BOOK REVIEWS

both the building and the destruction of the tower are enacted, since no unity could be achieved by men who, as Raphael explains, fail because of

Two things: First they do not believe in themselves, and because of this they do not believe in God. Because they do not believe in themselves or in God, they cannot believe in unity . . . therefore they cannot finish the tower which they imagine they are building.

To Thomas' insistence that they are indeed very busy, Raphael replies:

That is a pretense. Activity is their substitute for faith. Instead of believing in themselves, they seek to convince themselves, by their activity, that they exist.

But, as he states in the concluding lines of the scene— ". . . it is Babylon's beginning!" And the chorus continues:

Now blow upon this plain you winds of heaven.

Blow, blow, you winds of God, upon the sands.

Scatter the seeds of war to the world's end.

In Scene Two, "The Trial," set in the square of the half-ruined city, Raphael and Thomas discuss Babylon's dragging down of the nations into chaos. The captain discovers that the saboteur, the traitor who sold Babylon to the enemy, is Language, "in the pay of thought and communication." He and his regiments, words, have sold them out to the enemy. Among the witnesses called in to testify is a professor who attempts to prove to the leader that "words are the ultimate reality." Truth, Falsehood, and Propaganda are called to the stand in order of their treachery. Truth, enemy of the Mammoth State, who will not conform to the slogans of the Leader, is condemned to death, but the second philosopher interrupts with the argument that there is no need for this, since Truth has never existed. Propaganda, whose name is Legion, and who on being arraigned is asked to swear "to conceal the truth, the whole truth, and to confuse nothing but the issue," is declared to be the faithful guardian of the Mammoth Democracy and, decorated with the order of the Tower, is sent forth to form the minds of the young. Falsehood, who calls himself Truth, "who penetrates reality by destroying it," and who takes all the credit for building the Tower, tells them that it has never been destroyed, for it is "not a building, but an influence, a mentality, an invisible power." The leader apologizes for not having recognized him before, and asks what shall be done with the people who resist his authority. Falsehood replies, "Let all men serve me in chains." As to the last witness, Silence, they will not hear him. "Useless! Throw him out! Let silence be crucified!"

Part Two, "The City of God," Scene One—"Zodiac" takes place on a river bank. Raphael, Thomas, a prophet, and children discuss the buried city which the prophet tells them "the westward ships will soon discover on another continent young and new." Whereupon a responsory is taken up between the prophet and the children, the latter lyrically introducing each sign of the Zodiac; the import is prophetic of the new city, the city of God, "built without hands, without labor, without money and without plans." "And we," says the prophet, are stones in the walls of this city. Let us run to find our places. Though we may run in the dark, our destiny is full of glory."

Scene Two—"The Exiles," is placed in a village on a river. With Raphael

RENASCENCE

and Thomas are the prophet, chorus, dancers, villagers, exiles, and an ancient, whose lament echoes that of the scriptural harpers who wept beside alien waters remembering Sion. But these weep for a country which they have forgotten. They see a festive village whose inhabitants are rejoicing. This is the *real* village. Reflected in the waters of the river, and upside-down, is another village "whose houses in the water are destroyed by the movements in the water, but recreate their image in the stillness that follows"—symbol of the city of men, our world. The joy of the villagers contrasts with the nostalgic cries of the exiles, for they are "the men who have never been conquered by the builders of the ancient tower. Since they say what they mean they are able to love one another, and since they live mostly in silence they know what is the beginning of life, and its meaning and its end. For they are the children of God." A distant trumpet announces the great messenger, and a voice sounds—that of the Lion of Isaias:

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen . . .
The kings have seen her, drowning in the sea.

The voices of the islands, of the hills, and of the cities sing that there is no more despair. Babylon was destroyed "By one word uttered in silence." Another responsory (chorus, prophet, Thomas, Raphael) lauds the Word, and the play ends on the apocalyptic note of vision as all cry out:

Lo the Word and the white horse
With eyes of flame to judge and fight
Power and meekness in His hand
Mercy in His look like wine.
He alone can break the seal
And tell the conquerors His Name.
ADORATE DOMINUM!

Though the dramatic note sounds repeatedly through much of Thomas Merton's poetry, this is purportedly his first effort at poetic drama, and it is a powerful and moving *tour de force*. He both dominates and controls his medium as *sub specie aeternitatis* he probes, indicts, and prescribes for the spiritual and intellectual maladies of our world. Throughout there is a fine balancing of poetic prose and lapidary units of lyric poetry such as the songs of the dancers in the final scene.

With a poetry so sparingly structured as is Merton's in this volume—a poetry which in Eliot's words stands "naked in its bare bones"—there is always the risk that the superficial, too literal reader will not trouble to probe beneath the surface, and so miss the essential poetry, its pertinence-in-depth, and its many-layered strata of significances at the spiritual and metaphysical levels. This is a poetry of contemplation, and it would seem superfluous to remark that the reader who is not willing to extend himself to meet the enlargement of a profound experience, or who expects to be carried along on recurrent waves of emotion will be sorely disappointed. This poetry is marked by its restraint. And whether Merton in a line or phrase or neatly juxtaposed paradox gives some sharp critique of the vagaries of our modern world, the poems are everywhere quick with a large human compassion which only one who sees reality from God's side can possess.

The imagery throughout is vivid and memorable. One or two images or a

RENASCENCE

single sentence can at times evoke and establish a situation, as in the initial poem of the book, "How to Enter a Big City,"

Cars after cars, after cars, and then
A little yellow road goes by without a murmur.

Or in "Sports Without Blood—A Letter to Dylan Thomas (1948)" where

The boats slide down their oil on an army of wrinkles,
While blades replace the upside down cathedrals
With a wallop of bells.

and the men who "lay down to sleep in the pavilion/with a whisper of flannel and leather;

... from their ten million pots and pipes
Their dreams crept out and fumed at the wet night,
While they slept in the cloud without Christ.
Then angels ploughed them under the ground
With little songs as sharp as needles
And words that shone by night as bright as omens.

And "In the blue waking of those elements/Whose study is our quibble and our doom," in "Spring Storm": "O watch the woolen hundreds on the run!" In the poem "Annunciation" which first appeared in the *Commonweal*, he finds Our Lady in her room as

The girl prays by the bare wall
Between the lamp and the chair.
(Framed with an angel in our galleries
She has a richer painted room, sometimes a crown.
Yet seven pillars of obscurity
Build her to Wisdom's house, and Ark, and Tower.
She is the Secret of another Testament
She owns their manna in her jar.)

The occasional Eliotisms are deliberately placed, and pointed up by—in most cases—enclosing quotations: "Those are radios that were his eyes."), and where these occur they blend into the poetic texture and so illuminate it as to be highly effective.

Everywhere in this book is the mark of the author's total dedication, for such startling depths of spiritual insight and authentic compassion can only have sprung from a heart entirely given to God.

The publication of the allegorical drama *The Tower of Babel* alone would justify this book, but the added enrichment of twenty-one new Merton poems between its covers makes *The Strange Islands* a rare and coveted volume not only for the serious literary scholar, but as well for every lover of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True.

SISTER M. THERESE

"Dear Edward"

Edward Martyn and the Irish Theatre. By Sister Marie-Thérèse Courtney, R.S.M.
Vantage. \$3.00.

ONE of the most neglected of the figures who united their talents and their energies to bring about the revival of literature in Ireland at the close of the last century is Edward Martyn. Since that time only one work, a biographical

RENASCENCE

study by Denis Gwynn, has been written about him. Now Sr. M. Thérèse Courtney, who holds her doctorate from the University of Fribourg, commendably aids in correcting this deficiency. Her book focuses upon Martyn's artistic and intellectual achievements.

Dubliners, in the heyday of the revival, could always depend upon the individualistic traits of the city's many literary personalities for engaging table talk. Easily one of the most unusual of these writers was the enigmatic Martyn, who in life and even in death provided much to gossip about. As the only wealthy Catholic landlord holding membership in the Kildare Street Club, then a symbol of Protestant and English ascendancy in Ireland, he engaged in a series of social, political, and religious skirmishes against its directors. When they tried to expel him for his nationalistic protest against the visit of the King to Ireland, he brought them to court. He won his case, but at the expense of being ostracized by his fellow members. He continued, however, to use the club's facilities mainly because he craved rich foods, and the club was the only place in Dublin where he could find caviar. Worst of all, the outcast further upset the club's social aplomb by bringing his friends, among them a Catholic priest, to recite the rosary in one of the main lounges.

Upon his death in 1923, the first bequest of his will granted his body to a college in Dublin for dissection to aid medical research. For that purpose, moreover, he donated 1000 pounds. His final wish requested that his body should be buried in a pauper's grave.

The principal value of Sr. M. Thérèse's book lies in her attempt to show Martyn, throughout his life, seeking to resolve the conflicting forces within him so that he might achieve mental peace. Thus we learn how his epicurean tastes clashed with his ascetic private habits especially at home; how his philosophic ideas, although strongly influenced by Idealism, almost instinctively reached out for the more solid grounds of Realism; how his deep-rooted Catholicism struggled with his admiration for the neo-pagan world.

Martyn had an undistinguished academic career. After he had completed his studies with the Jesuits in Ireland and in England, he went to Oxford. There he came under the influence of German transcendentalism, which was in full spate during the 1870's while T. H. Green held the chair of moral philosophy. There also the youth was easily charmed by Pater's aesthetic cult of ideal beauty and perfection of form as epitomized in Greek art. Martyn, however, became quite unhappy at Oxford and left without a degree.

At the insistence of his mother, a hard and cold disciplinarian who tried to run her son's life up to her death, he set out on a Grand Tour of Europe to complete his education. In 1880, he joined his cousin and fellow Irish landlord, George Moore, who had already been living in Paris for almost ten years.

Moore's life centered in the *Nouvelle Athènes*, among such writers and artists as Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Manet, and Degas. After the disappointments of Oxford and the real world, Martyn seems to have found the ideas of his cousin's friends much to his liking. To one in his frame of mind what could be more alluring than the siren call of de l'Isle-Adam's philosophic idealism: "Je m'en irai dans ces régions de l'Idéal où l'Insulte des humains n'atteint plus."

Out of his Grand Tour with its memories of the Palestrina Choir at Cologne, of Wagner's music at Bayreuth, and of the beauties of Greek art, Martyn gained interests that deeply colored his life and found many recurring echoes throughout

BOOK REVIEWS

his plays. But by far the most pervasive influence from his life outside Ireland was his philosophic Idealism. Sr. M. Thérèse demonstrates its importance in his early plays, such as *The Heather Field* and *Maeve*, and then its gradual decline in his later works; by the difficult task of self-correction and self-criticism he finally progressed towards Realism.

Martyn's important role in the foundation of the Irish Literary Theatre became a source of great satisfaction to him. His then nascent nationalism and his desire to have Ireland join more fully with the broad stream of European culture made him enter full-heartedly into the movement. While on the Continent he had admired the intellectual virility of the German, French, and Scandinavian dramatists, particularly the symphonic structure of Ibsen's plays. Hence, when he associated with Yeats and Lady Gregory, he advocated that Irish dramatists should go to Ibsen not so much for his ideas but for his superb craftsmanship.

Martyn and Yeats, however, had different plans for the growth of Irish drama, and by 1905 they had parted ways. Martyn hoped for a realistic theatre which would unfold the problems of the middle classes, but Yeats sought for a drama of poetry and imagination. In defense of his aims Yeats argued that the writer should go to country life where speech was abundant and thought extravagant. Yeats's views, of course, prevailed and thus even to this day, for better or for worse, peasant plays dominate the Abbey stage.

Although made an object of ridicule as "Dear Edward" by Moore in his famous trilogy, *Hail and Farewell*, and the butt of Yeats's critical remarks, Martyn repaid his detractors in full measure. In his extravaganza, *Romulus and Remus*, for example, he links his two favorite pictures of Yeats. One depicts the poet stretched languorously on a large sofa in Lady Gregory's drawing room, pretending to be in a deep trance and united in spirit with one of the Irish mythical heroes. As an appropriate backdrop, Lady Gregory stands dutifully by, feeding him chocolate creams at the end of a long silver sugar-tongs. The other portrays Yeats, enchanted by the spell of a moonlit night, sitting for hours on top of a tree in the woods near Martyn's home, while the guests stand around in silent admiration and awe.

Even though hampered in her research by the involved difficulties in obtaining all of Martyn's known manuscripts, Sr. M. Thérèse has cast her net widely and well to include all available English, Irish, and Continental material about her subject. The conclusions she arrives at in her book indicate, on the whole, both careful and competent judgment.

St. Louis University

MICHAEL J. O'NEILL

Index to Vol. X

ESSAYS

Title	Page
Charles Péguy's Rise to Fame, by Hans A. Schmitt	129
Eliot's Magi, by Mother Mary Eleanor, S.H.C.J.	26
Frost and Cycicism, by Richard D. Lord	19
Herbert and Hopkins: Two Lyrics, by Sister M. Joselyn, O.S.B.	192
Imagery in Modern Marian Poetry, by Mother Anita von Wellsheim, R.S.C.J.	176
London Letter, by John Pick	171
Some Symbols of Death and Destiny in Four Quartets, by Sister Marie Virginia, O.P.	187
The Church and Major Scobie, by A. A. DeVitis	115
The Church, Society, and Paul Bourget, by Rudolph J. Mondelli	77
The Penny World of T. S. Eliot, by David W. Evans	121
The Two Views of Poetry: An Essay in Reconciliation, by John Julian Ryan	68
The Value-function of the Novel and Its Criticism, by J. Robert Barth, S.J.	11
T. S. Eliot's Poetry: The Quest and the Way (Part I), by John B. Vickery	3
T. S. Eliot's Poetry: The Quest and the Way (Part II), by John B. Vickery	59

REVIEWS

A Census of Finnegans Wake, by Adaline Glasheen (H. Marshall McLuhan)	196
André Gide, by Enid Starkie (John H. Meyer)	84
André Gide l'insaisissable Protée, by Germaine Brée (John H. Meyer)	84
André Gide-Paul Valéry: Correspondance 1890-1942 (John H. Meyer)	84
André Gide romancier, by Pierre Lafille (John H. Meyer)	84
Autobiographical Writings, by John Henry Newman (Martin J. Svaglic)	208
Beginnings: Prose and Verse Selected in a Contest for New Catholic Writers (Sr. Mariella Gable, O.S.B.)	150
Brocéliande, by Henry de Montherlant (Spire Pitou)	157
Catholic Literary Opinion in the Nineteenth Century, by Philip H. Vitale (R. J. Schoeck)	106
Chemin des Fumées, by Renée Rivet (Herbert Lust)	41
Coventry Patmore, by E. J. Oliver (Terence L. Connolly, S.J.)	53
Dedalus on Crete: Essays on the Implications of Joyce's Portrait (H. Marshall McLuhan)	196
Dublin's Joyce, by Hugh Kenner (H. Marshall McLuhan)	106
Edward Martyn and the Irish Theatre, by Sr. Marie - Thérèse Courtney (Michael J. O'Neill)	219
Esthétique de Max Jacob, by René Guy Cadou (Spire Pitou)	52
Faith and Prejudice and Other Unpublished Sermons of Cardinal Newman, ed. by Birmingham Oratory (Martin J. Svaglic)	208
Frontiers in American Catholicism, by Walter J. Ong, S.J. (Rudolph E. Morris)	108
Gide vivant (John H. Meyer)	84
Give Me Possession, by Paul Horgan (Robert O. Bowen)	160
In a Great Tradition: The Life of Dame Lauretta McLachlan, Abbess of Stanbrook, by the Benedictines of Stanbrook (Sr. M. Hester, S.S.N.D.)	162
Index détaillé de quinze volumes de l'édition Gallimard des Oeuvres complètes d'André Gide, by Justin O'Brien (John H. Meyer)	84
In the Rose of Time, by Robert Fitzgerald (Nicholas Joost)	137
James Joyce: Epiphanies, ed. by O. A. Silverman (H. Marshall McLuhan)	106

INDEX

Title	Page
J.-K. Huysmans: Lettres inédites à Edmond de Goncourt, ed. by Pierre Lambert (George A. Cevasco)	104
Joyce and Aquinas, by William T. Noon (H. Marshall McLuhan)	106
Joyce and Shakespeare, by William M. Shutte (H. Marshall McLuhan)	196
Joyce et Mallarmé, by David Hayman (H. Marshall McLuhan)	106
Joyce: The Man, the Work, the Reputation, by Marvin Magalaner and Richard M. Kain (H. Marshall McLuhan)	106
La Jeunesse d'André Gide, by Jean Delay (John H. Meyer)	84
La Nouvelle Revue Française: Hommage à Paul Claudel (Oreste F. Pucciani)	164
L'Art de François Mauriac, by Nelly Cormeau (Fernand Vial)	200
La Vie d'André Gide, by Claude Mahias (John H. Meyer)	84
Le Malfaiteur, by Julien Green (John H. Meyer)	151
Le Problème d'André Gide, by Henri Planche (John H. Meyer)	84
Les Auligny, by Henry de Montherlant (Spire Pitou)	157
Les Fleurs du Mal, by Charles Baudelaire, tr. by Alan Conder (John H. Meyer)	32
Les nourritures terrestres d'André Gide et les Bucoliques de Virgile, by Justin O'Brien (John H. Meyer)	84
Lines of Life, by François Mauriac (Fernand Vial)	200
Literary Criticism: A Short History, by W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks (Victor M. Hamm)	100
Madeleine et André Gide, by Jean Schlumberger (John H. Meyer)	84
Mauriac et l'Art du Roman, by Joseph Majault (Fernand Vial)	200
Mauriac par lui-même, by Pierre-Henri Simon (Fernand Vial)	200
Maurras jusqu'à l'Action Française, by Léon S. Roudiez (Chester W. Obuchowski)	207
Montherlant et l'héritage de la Renaissance, by Jean Datain (Spire Pitou)	157
Péguy, his Prose and Poetry, by Alexander Dru (Jean David)	212
Portrait of André Gide, by Justin O'Brien (John H. Meyer)	84
Présences contemporaines, Vol. 1 and 2, by Pierre Brodin (Spire Pitou)	46
Rilke, Gide et Valéry, by Renée Lang (John H. Meyer)	84
Roman Holiday: The Catholic Novels of Evelyn Waugh (Frederick J. Stopp)	94
Sound of a Distant Horn, by Sven Stolpe (Robert O. Bowen)	144
Talking Bronco, by Roy Campbell (Nicholas Joost)	137
The Angel in the Corner, by Monica Dickens (Robert O. Bowen)	144
The Early Joyce: The Book Reviews: 1902-1903, ed. by Stanislaus Joyce and Ellsworth Mason (H. Marshall McLuhan)	106
The Fire and the Anvil: Notes on Modern Poetry, by James K. Baxter (Luise March)	111
The Flowers of Evil, by Charles Baudelaire, translations ed. by Marthiel and Jackson Mathews (John H. Meyer)	32
The Flowers of Evil, by Charles Baudelaire, tr. by William Aggeler (John H. Meyer)	32
The James Joyce Review, Vol. 1, No. 1 (H. Marshall McLuhan)	196
The Letters of James Joyce, ed. by Stuart Gilbert (H. Marshall McLuhan)	196
The Light Beyond, by Leonard J. Fick, S.J. (Joseph Schwartz)	155
The Lively Arts of Sister Gervaise, by John L. Bonn (Robert O. Bowen)	144
The Mentor Book of Religious Verse, ed. by Horace Gregory and Marya Zaturenska (Nicholas Joost)	137
The Mystery of the Holy Innocents and Other Poems, by Charles Péguy (Jean David)	212
The New Apologists for Poetry, by Murray Krieger (Victor M. Hamm)	50
The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, by Evelyn Waugh (Frederick J. Stopp)	94

RENASCENCE

<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
The Second America Book of Verse, ed. by James Edward Tobin (Sr. M. Thérèse, S.D.S.)	47
The Strange Islands, by Thomas Merton (Sr. M. Thérèse, S.D.S.)	214
The Threshing Floor, by Joseph Coyne (Robert O. Bowen)	144
The Transgressor, by Julian Green, tr. by Anne Green (John H. Meyer)	151
The Ulysses Theme, by W. B. Stanford (R. J. Schoeck)	42
Thin Ice, by Compton Mackenzie (Robert O. Bowen)	144
Thomas Merton: A Bibliography, by Frank Dell'Isola (Sr. M. Thérèse, S.D.S.)	38
Till We Have Faces, by C. S. Lewis (Chad Walsh)	103
T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays, by Grover Smith (H. Marshall McLuhan)	102
Une Mort ambiguë, by Robert Mallet (John H. Meyer)	84

ESSAYISTS

Barth, J. Robert, S. J.	11	Mondelli, Rudolph J.	77
DeVitis, A. A.	115	Pick, John	171
Evans, David W.	121	Ryan, John Julian	68
Joselyn, Sr. M., O.S.B.	192	Schmitt, Hans A.	129
Lord, Richard D.	19	Vickery, John B.	3, 59
Marie Virginia, Sr., O.P.	187	von Wellsheim, Mother Anita, R.S.C.J.	176
Mary Eleanor, Mother, S.H.C.J.	26		

REVIEWERS

Bowen, Robert O.	144, 160	Morris, Rudolph E.	108
Cevasco, George A.	104	Obuchowski, Chester W.	207
Connolly, Terence L., S.J.	53	O'Neill, Michael J.	219
David, Jean	212	Pitou, Spire	46, 52, 157
Gable, Sr. Mariella, O.S.B.	150	Pucciani, Oreste F.	164
Hamm, Victor M.	50, 100	Schoeck, R. J.	42, 106
Hester, Sr. M., S.S.N.D.	162	Schwartz, Joseph	155
Joost, Nicholas	137	Stopp, Frederick J.	94
Lust, Herbert	41	Svaglic, Martin J.	208
March, Luise	111	Thérèse, Sr. M., S.D.S.	38, 47, 214
McLuhan, H. Marshall	102, 106, 196	Vial, Fernand	200
Meyer, John H.	32, 84, 151	Walsh, Chad	103

C 14

0585 □
132E
25E3
332E
4283
5582
6E8 7E28

0585 □
132E
25E3
332E
4283
5582
6E8 7E28